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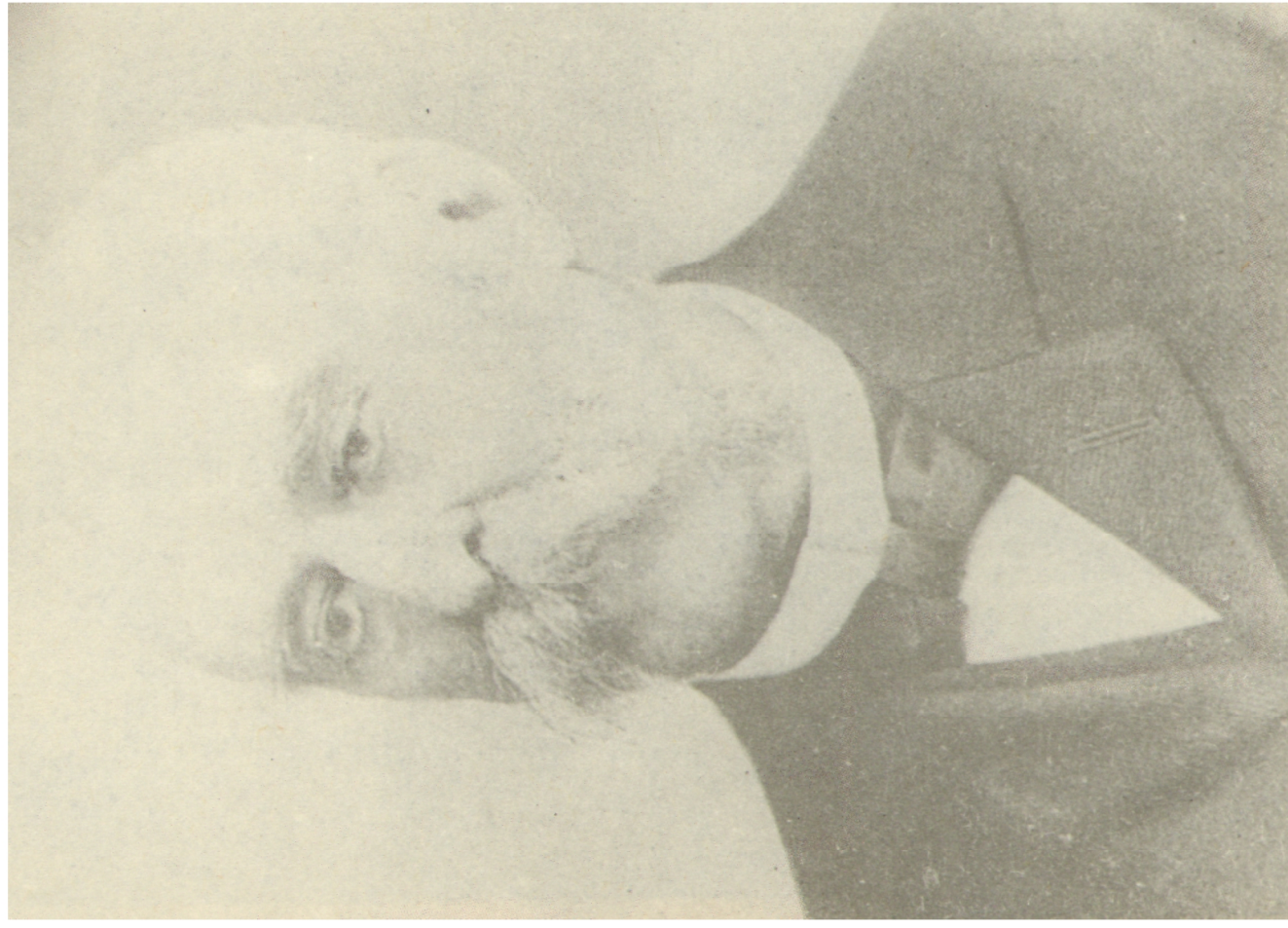
100
YEARS
SOFIA
UNIVERSITY

HISTORY
AND PRESENT DAY

Kliment
Ohridski
University
Press



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**Kliment Ohridski
University Press
Sofia • 1988**

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100 години Софийски университет –
история и съвремие
1988
c/o Uusautor, Sofia

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1988
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Chapter 1

THE BEGINNING

For a university a history of one hundred years is both short and long. Short it is, indeed, if one seeks to compare achievements with what in Western Europe is the result of many hundreds of years of academic tradition: the scientific prestige and the high educational standards of universities in Western Europe naturally derive from a wealth of historical experience for which the length of time is indeed significant. But an academic history of one hundred years is long in a historical perspective – only ten years longer – of national sovereignty regained after a gap of five centuries. Thus the present is rather more likely to be perceived as a promise for the future than as the fulfilment of a recent past, and a look back is meant to focus above all on the spirit of enthusiastic patriotism which the founding fathers of the University shared in their noble effort.

In the month of October, 1988 the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia will celebrate its 100th anniversary. This national jubilee is indeed a fitting occasion to search for the testimony, which past decades bear, of the dynamics of life at the heart of Bulgarian intellectual endeavour.

The idea of a Bulgarian university took root way back during those five centuries of Ottoman rule which denied Bulgarians their national sovereignty and the opportunities to develop their political, economic, and cultural traditions. However, on a broader plane of comparison, the birth of Sofia University was the necessary result of the entire process of cultural accumulation in the history of a people who had in 681 A.D. proclaimed the first Slav state in Europe. In the mediaeval state of Bulgaria the dissemination of intellectual and artistic values flourished whose indigenous origins were not an obstacle for a process of interpretation with either Byzantine, or West-European culture. Bulgaria became the cradle of Slavonic literacy and learning, and that conditioned some early developments in Bulgarian culture which foreshadowed the European Renaissance. The Ottoman conquest came as a heavy blow which severed the national tradition from those general European tendencies which otherwise would, in all probability, have resulted in the rise of a Bulga-

rian university during the Middle Ages – as they did in the rise of West-European universities as early as the 12th century.

If one is to look for the origins of the academic idea among the elements of ethnic mentality, the most obvious answer that will come to mind is the traditional aspiration of Bulgarians towards knowledge and the attainment of ever higher intellectual standards. That Thirst for science and culture continued undefeated through the dark ages of Ottoman domination. It became increasingly manifest during the Bulgarian National Revival (18th-19th c.). During that time, while the Bulgarian community was gradually leaving the beaten track of oriental Ottoman feudalism for the road of capitalist economic progress, as a legitimate historical consequence, the first signs appeared of an organized movement for national liberation and the restoration of the Bulgarian state. With these two major trends in the mainstream of the Bulgarian Revival a third one should be noted: a Bulgarian Enlightenment which combined efforts to modernize teaching practices with a struggle to extricate the Bulgarian church and school from the tutelage of the Constantinople-based Greek Patriarchate.

The first leading figures of the Revival, who had introduced into Bulgarian soil the seeds of the European Enlightenment, were also the first to realize the necessity of a major headway in the development of teaching institutions and ideas under the heavy conditions of political, social and religious oppression. At the base of that educational pyramid, whose apex the University later became, were the monastic schools of the early Bulgarian Revival. Housed as they were in monastic cells at churches and monasteries, or on the humble premises of lodging-houses and private homes, those schools relied on the simplest educational principles and teaching techniques but still managed to disseminate knowledge, to foster the awareness of Bulgarian ethnic identity, and to preserve the Bulgarian cultural tradition. Later on, the changing economic, social, and cultural environment forced Bulgarians to look for higher accomplishments in the existing Greek schools (primary schools, public schools, and academies) which during the 18th and the early 19th century met the demand for secular education. Next came Helleno-Slavonic schools. By that institution patriotic-minded activists of the Revival sought to reconcile the secular framework of education, which was Greek in origin, with teaching done in Bulgarian by ethnic Bulgarians who would protect the indigenous tradition from Greek assimilatory ambitions.

A significant further step in the development of Bulgarian education during the first half of the 19th century was the setting up of mutual-

instruction schools, grade schools, and secondary schools. The first of those secular schools was opened in the town of Gabrovo in 1835. Vassil Aprilov, the school's founder, was a champion of modern Bulgarian education who, like Peter Beron, Neophyte Rilski, Naiden Gerov, and others, gave material and moral support to its development, and laid the foundation stone of its lasting democratic and patriotic orientation. Those eminent public figures did their best to shield Bulgarian schools from Ottoman influences, and thwarted the avaricious attempts of alien religious and cultural propaganda at the assimilation of Bulgarian ethnic traditions. Young scholars in over 1,500 modern Bulgarian schools worked to grasp, consolidate and develop the elements of a standard literary language which proved a most significant factor for the cohesion of the Bulgarian nation which was then taking shape¹.

The revival of education in Bulgaria was given a new impetus, and came yet closer to the idea of a national university, with the activities of the Exarchate. The latter was an autonomous ecclesiastical institution of Bulgarian Christians in the Ottoman Empire which had come as a crowning achievement, in the late sixties and early seventies of the 19th century, of the national religious movement for the secession of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church from the Constantinople Patriarchate. The authority of that All-Bulgarian institution extended over matters of faith but it also protected and afforded material support to the expanding network of mutual-instruction, grade, secondary and trade schools, community centres, and school boards. By the early seventies of last century that network had, on the whole, acquired the characteristic features of a national institution of general education. Together with the growing national literature, press, book-publishing, drama, music and architecture, that institution laid the foundations of modern Bulgarian culture whose intellectual orbit encompassed the idea of university education, too.

Parallel to the growth of the academic idea went the gradual increase in the number of its professional promulgators. At first those were scholars of modest claims who had graduated from Greek or modern Bulgarian schools. Later on, many young Bulgarians were led away to schools and universities abroad by that inherent yearning for knowledge. More than 550 graduates from foreign educational establishments formed during the Revival period the main body of the young Bulgarian intelligentsia. The predominant part of those had studied in Russia. The fact can be accounted for by the shared Slavonic heritage of the two nations, as well as by the great number of scholarships which Russian institutions granted, and the attraction which modern university practices in Russia held at the time.

Success was registered simultaneously by efforts to support and organize emerging Bulgarian science. The Bulgarian Literary Society was established in Braïlla, Romania, in 1869. That society became later the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAN)².

The above situation gave rise to hopes among young Bulgarian intellectuals about the establishment of a university. They regarded the project as the possible highest achievement of an increasingly efficient education system in the land. They also gave their realistic consideration to the educational, cultural, political and economic aspects of the historical environment in which the edifice of a national university would be firmly based. As disciples of established European institutions of high learning, those leading intellectuals also believed that a university should train students in the modern habits of thought, and facilitate their career choices from a vast field of contemporary theories and practical skills.

One of that circle of Bulgarian intellectuals was Dr. Ivan Seliminski who in 1864 launched an appeal to the public for the establishment of a university that would crown the development of Bulgarian education. To the future temple of Bulgarian science he left by his will a great number of manuscripts, and a considerable portion of his property³. During that time a host of prominent public figures, like V. Aprilov, I. Bogorov, G. Krustevitch, P. Bonchev, K. Photinov, also took Seliminski's idea to heart. They all cherished a dream about a national teaching institution which could rely on the broadest public support⁴. In all their plans, in all their efforts and aspirations, the attainment of that goal was also the prime consideration of M. Drinov, V. Stoyanov, and V. Droumev – founding members of the Bulgarian Literary Society in Braïlla.

Much of that dream was too grand to be realistic, much of it was moved by genuine public-spirited exaltation, and by the selfless love of one's country; but there was also in it the sound realization of an urgent need that had arisen in the public mind of the nascent nation, and the consequent desire, on the part of its leading figures – scholars and educationalists – to take timely action in the best of its interests. The Bulgarian Exarchate also favoured the academic cause, and even considered some practical steps towards its progress. Those however were blocked by some crisis developments in the Ottoman Empire during the seventies of the last century⁵. Bulgarians from every part of the land voiced their support for the idea in letters to the press. Those letters contained projects about the location, status and nature of the future university. The overwhelming opinion was that the national university should be the ultimate fruition of modern ideas in the development of Bulgarian educa-

tion and culture, and that its principles should reflect the long democratic tradition of the Bulgarian community, as well as the most forward European notions in science and pedagogics⁶.

In the summer of 1860 Bulgarians living in Constantinople set up a committee to raise funds in support of a Bulgarian university in the capital of the Empire. Other opinions favoured the establishment of the university within the historical boundaries of the nation. The debate was provoked by both patriotic emotions and political considerations. However, all opinions converged in the understanding that future university graduates "should be capable of genuinely serving the Fatherland", and that the main task of the academic institution should be "to breed true Bulgarians, in the public spirit, and in the spirit of the true Christian faith [...] teachers of the nation, men of letters, preachers of the word of God, champions of learning."⁷

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, which brought freedom to the Bulgarian nation, interrupted for some time the development of the academic idea. It was again taken up with an even greater enthusiasm in the newly restored Bulgarian state. Only ten years after the Liberation, it was finally materialized in the University of Sofia by the old and the new generation of Bulgarian educationalists who were true to the spirit of the Revival, and cherished its great intellectual tradition as part of the national heritage.

* * *

In Berlin in the summer of 1878 the diplomatic representatives of the great European powers put a final stop to the Russo-Turkish War of the previous year.

Some months before that, Russia, using its entire military might, had brought the Ottoman Empire to its knees. By the preliminary peace treaty, signed at St. Stephano on March 3rd, 1878, Bulgaria had been constituted a free state within its ancient boundaries which took in three geographic regions: Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia.

However, the Western powers would not put up with the idea of having a large and powerful Slavonic principality in the central part of the Balkans which would have naturally become the mainstay of Russian policy there. Thus they took advantage of the diplomatic isolation in which Russia was placed at the time and imposed on it the unfair terms of the Berlin Treaty which partitioned the new Bulgarian state. Territories were severed from Bulgaria which ethnically and historically appertained to it. Turkish rule was reestablished in Macedonia, and in large parts of

Thrace which were densely populated by ethnic Bulgarians. The territories north of the Balkan Range, and Sofia district formed the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria, paying tribute to the Ottoman Empire. The southern part of Bulgaria remained politically and militarily dependent on the Porte but was also granted complete administrative autonomy under the name of Eastern Rumelia. Thus the reunification of national territories became, since 1878, the main issue of Bulgarian foreign policy, and significantly determined the future destiny of Bulgaria.

Notwithstanding the partition, capitalism started to make rapid progress both in the Bulgarian Principality, and in Eastern Rumelia. Early success, registered by the economies of the two countries, as well as in the organization of politics, government and defence, demonstrated to the international community what self-determination could do for a talented, hard-working and forward-minded people. In 1885 that people boldly violated the provisions, arbitrarily imposed upon it by the Berlin Treaty, and carried out the Unification of the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia, and ultimately asserted its sovereign will in a successful war against the Kingdom of Serbia which had been opposed to the reunification of Bulgaria. Having thus made a significant first step towards the complete reunification of its national territories, Bulgaria rose closer to its full height and moved ahead rapidly to catch up with contemporary Europe in every respect of its existence as a state.

Alongside with the development of economic and public life went efforts in the domain of national culture. The main content of that process was that "on the one hand, the traditions and the achievements of the Revival period were viewed in the new light of having immediately preceded an all-significant turning point in Bulgarian ethnic history /while/ on the other, successive governments' policy was to encourage the positive influence of Russian and West European culture in an effort to shake off Oriental apathy and lead the country onto the road of European cultural development and modernization."⁸ Its national essence kept intact, Bulgarian culture was being deeply pervaded by the spirit of modernity and drawn closer to European standards.

Modern developments in education were one of the many sides of that process. Adequate teaching facilities grew in number, together with the development of teachers' training. In less than 30 years schools tripled in their number, and the number of pupils increased fivefold. By 1911, Bulgaria had 5,209 nursery, primary and grade schools, apart from a number of special-training and vocational schools⁹. Within the general

context of cultural improvement since 1878, the immediate result of widespread education was that an educational establishment became an important factor in the life of local communities and a landmark of their urbanization. Free libraries, set up at schools, also enhanced the public standing of educational institutions. Thus, to the benefit of public education, the democratic traditions of the Revival were taken up by progressive legislation.

Young Bulgarian science also moved decisively forward. Sofia, the newly proclaimed capital, became its natural centre of gravity. The National Literary Society, which has been mentioned already, grew and prospered here. The National Library was started in Sofia as early as the end of 1878, to become a major source of stockpiled information on which scientific research relied heavily. With its comparatively liberal political climate and with its large field of new intellectual opportunities, Bulgaria attracted many scientists and academic tutors from abroad. Their research initiatives also contributed to the rapid early progress of young Bulgarian science.

It becomes obvious that the whole public atmosphere in post-Ottoman Bulgaria was conducive to the realization of the academic idea. In 1880 Ivan Gyuzelev, then Minister of public education, submitted to Parliament an education bill. True to the essence of projects dating back to the Revival period, the Bill proposed that, following the completion of full courses at grammar and modern schools, "a Bulgarian high school (university) be founded to comprehend jurisprudence, natural sciences, medicine, and technology"¹⁰.

Irecek, the prominent Czech historian who succeeded Gyuzelev as minister of education, also appealed for going ahead faster with the university project. His arguments were adequately based on the growing cultural and economic needs of young Bulgaria, which was developing rapidly in every way – on the lack of sufficiently competent teachers for the secondary level of education.

The idea also met with Prince Alexander Battenberg's approval. It was championed by educationalists in Eastern Rumelia who were actually planning to start a three-year course in law in the autumn of 1885. However, the political upheaval which in early September brought about the Unification with the Principality, forced that initiative into the background; otherwise it would have become the first practical step towards a full-scale university.

By 1887 public and political willingness to go ahead with the university had reached a point where the Ministry of Public Education saw it fit to

draft the statutes of the establishment. Those outlined the rather modest profile of a degree course in education with specific emphasis on either world history and languages, or physics and mathematics. That single year's course would, "as time and needs decreed", eventually become a two-year one¹¹.

The honour and responsibility of becoming the founder of Sofia University fell on G. Zhivkov, Minister of Public Education in the new cabinet which S. Stambolov had formed in September 1887. The Prime Minister – a veteran of the national liberation movement and a politician of European stature – paid great attention to the development and modernization of education. The latter accounted for the fact that during Stambolov's term of office Bulgaria, as a nation, had the highest educational standards and was involved in the busiest cultural activity, as compared with other Balkan nations. Given that favourable atmosphere, the Education Minister, together with his collaborator Dr. Shishmanov, devoted all efforts, time and energy to the organization of the national university.

The university opened its doors in Sofia on Oct. 1, 1888 as the Higher Course in Education. Its Provisional Regulations were drafted by a group of young intellectuals who had dedicated to the greatest cultural edifice of the nation the knowledge they had acquired at the famous European universities, as well as the ardour of sincere patriotism. Ivan Shishmanov (the one mentioned above), who had just recently graduated at Leipzig University, became the heart and soul of that noble effort. The Regulations envisaged a single degree course in history and language, with world history, Slavonic languages and philosophy (including pedagogics) as the three main disciplines. The course was designed above all "to provide higher education, and to train teachers for the secondary schools". However, its initiators looked farther ahead, as well, and included provisions for the establishment of new "departments of various branches of study,"¹² which meant ultimately to reach the scope of a modern university by developing the original departments into university faculties.

Early indicators of those intentions were the organization of studies into two semesters a year, the three groups of subjects (general, special, and supplementary) on the syllabus, the system of examinations, the selection of students among honoured secondary school graduates and, last but not least, the high qualifications of the first lecturers. Those who faced the first batch of 43 students from the rostrum were, beyond any doubt, and regardless of their modest jobs at Sofia Grammar School, people of great intellect, learning, and teaching skill. Alexander

Theodorov-Ballan, chairman of the lecturers' council, had graduated at universities in Prague, and Leipzig. He read lectures on linguistics, dialectology and Slavonic philology in which he had a doctor's degree. L.Miletic, PhD, was another fine expert in Slavonic languages; he had graduated at Zagreb, and Prague. I.Georgov, PhD, was assigned to read lectures on pedagogics, psychology and the German language; he had studied in Vienna and Geneva, and had graduated at Jena University with a doctoral thesis on philosophy. Ballan, Miletic and Georgov were appointed lecturers in ordinary at the Higher Course and also became known in the academic world for their scholarly publications. The same appointment was granted, when he made his debut as a lecturer, to S.Stanimirov, headmaster of Sofia Grammar School. He was a graduate of the Kiev Theological Academy, and took up the lecture course in history.

N.Mikhailovski, Y.Kovatchev, and I.Danev were visiting lecturers. Mikhailovski, a Moscow University graduate in philology, had been a prominent literary and public figure during the Revival. He taught Greek. Kovatchev had graduated at a seminary in Belgrade and at the Kiev Theological Academy. He was assigned to read lectures on sociology and pedagogics. Danev had graduated in law and administration in France, and taught French. A year later his position was taken by the Swiss A.Audin, a graduate at Leipzig University.

It was obviously a matter of policy – unlike anywhere in the Balkans at the time – to choose, above all, Bulgarian lecturers for the Higher Course, who would from the very start lend “a proper national identity to that sublime altar of science.”¹³ That tendency added to the general public sympathy with respect to academic endeavours. Before the end of its first month of existence the Higher Course received a large donation of books from the National Library; the future University Library was thus started. The secondary school for boys afforded the hospitality of its new building to the first students at the Higher Course. Surrounded as they were with attention from every quarter and placed high in the nation's esteem, Alexander Theodorov-Ballan, the first rector, and every one of his team of lecturers made laudable efforts to present a lecture course that would deserve its academic status.

By the end of 1888 the Higher Course had sufficiently built up its reputation with the Ministry of Public Education for the latter to raise the suggestion of upgrading it into a higher school (university). Parliament and Stambolov's cabinet responded readily; new funds were allocated for the purpose, and the special Higher School Act was passed¹⁴.

The Higher School Act placed the academic institution very much under strict state authority, something which reflected a tendency in Capitalist Bulgaria, pronounced very strongly during Stambolov's term of office, towards centralized administration. Against the best principles of academic autonomy, the Ministry of Education alone could take decisions concerning the establishment of new departments, the duration of courses, etc.¹⁵ That situation later served to create many problems which the slowness of the official process and the increasing number of bureaucratic restrictions could hardly help to solve. It did not, however, defeat the lecturers' enthusiasm. On Jan. 31, 1889, those seven pioneers of academic thought in Bulgaria received their appointments to the Higher School, which the Higher Course in Education had naturally moved on to become¹⁶.

The new educational establishment had to face a host of serious immediate tasks. The rector and the Lecturers' Council took energetic steps to ensure the supply of periodicals to the School's library, to have a reading-room furnished, to speed up the drafting of the School's regulations, which was being delayed by the Ministry of Education. The lecturers demanded better teaching facilities and higher pay; more than that, they also insisted on academic autonomy and a broader freedom of initiative in the running of the Higher School.

The Higher School owed its early achievements entirely to those seven champions of the academic idea. In a single year, using every bit of their commitment, their abilities and their selfless enthusiasm, they managed to vindicate the School's existence in the eyes of the Bulgarian public. In the course of that year Bulgarians who loved Bulgaria and Progress grew steadily convinced that the development of culture in the young state was inconceivable without the Higher School, that in the School's development and success the whole nation should rest its hopes to attain new heights of intellectual perfection.

Chapter 2

YEARS OF PROGRESS

There were some major tendencies which ran through the early history of Sofia University from 1889, when it became the Higher School, till the end of the First World War in 1918, which marked the final milestone in modern Bulgarian history. One of the tendencies was that of continual structural improvements which also brought about the appearance and development of new teaching and research units. The motive force of the second tendency was that never failing ambition on the part of the lecturers to attain established European standards of academic tuition and research. Thus, as a centre of education and science, the University of Sofia advanced along the path of the time-honoured academic tradition. That tendency was based not only in the activities of the staff, whose numbers and qualifications grew, but also in the eager academic initiative which the growing number of students displayed.

Another consistent determination, shared by staff and students alike was to uphold the traditional academic principles and above all the right of academic autonomy, vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education and other government offices; as well as to insist on the modernization of existing facilities, the supply of new teaching aids, the introduction of better financial provisions for the lecturers and the undergraduates. In a broader historical perspective, one could also attribute the force of a tendency to the significant role which the University played in the overall cultural life of the nation, in the various public and political movements.

Shortly after the start of the first academic term at the Higher School, the Svoboda (Liberty) newspaper wrote the following: "It is beyond any doubt that history was made on Oct. 2nd, 1889, for the opening of the first higher educational establishment in Bulgaria has veritably laid the foundation stone of an institution that will in the future cherish and scatter the seeds of exact and superior knowledge that will best serve..., to awaken our nation, and will benefit its moral, intellectual and material advancement..."¹ True enough, the Higher School was entering its second year of existence with great hopes and plans for the future.

A new department of physics and mathematics was set up during the 1889-1890 academic year. People of sound academic and scientific reputation (E.Ivanov, P.Raikov, N.Dobrev, D.Agoura, G.Popov, M.Balabanov, the Czechs T.Monin and I.Brežka, the Swiss A.Audin, and Russian professor M.Dragomanov) joined the new department, and the existing department of history and philology. Again, the names on the list demonstrated, with a few exceptions, the original intention to uphold the national identity of the Higher School. The foreign choices, on the other hand, left no doubt of the necessity in a modern world to draw on wider intellectual resources, and to keep abreast of international achievements in science and education.

The same was confirmed by the body of regulations based on the Higher School Act. The former was passed in the autumn of 1889 as a final elaboration of the School's university status with provisions for the establishment of an academic council (a senior governing body), and faculty councils; for the submission of special theses by last-year students; for the establishment of undergraduate scientific societies, etc.² The Regulations also provided the Lecturers' Council (the future Academic Council) with legal grounds to demand justifiable financial support from the Ministry, like subsidies for the supply of books to the Library, travel allowances for lecturers' field work, prizes for proficiency, etc. D. Agoura, who succeeded Alexander Theodorov-Ballan as rector (formerly chairman of the Lecturers' Council) suggested that the course of study be extended from three to four years. Some of the demands were met by the Ministry, but others were lost in a long drawn-out official correspondence where unwarranted opinions clashed with common sense – an approach that was rather typical of bourgeois governments in Bulgaria.

In spite of those difficulties, during the third academic year of 1890-91 twelve lecturers taught 131 students at the Department of History and Philology, and 72 students attended lectures read by seven lecturers at the Department of Physics and Mathematics. The end of that academic year also saw the first group of 34 graduates at the Department of History and Philology, formally qualified as equal to those who had graduated abroad, leave the School and take positions as teachers at secondary schools³. The recognition it had thus received made the Higher School a centre of even greater attraction for young Bulgarians eager to learn. Its broadest public prestige grew stronger. So, it was for good reasons that the Lecturers' Council advanced the proposal to have the 1st of October declared Day of the Higher School, on which the outgoing rector would

present the annual report, and the newly elected one would read a lecture on certain aspects of his special field.

Another look at the list of lecturers during that time, through to the beginning of the 20th century, would certainly reveal a strong Czech presence. That could be explained by the geographical closeness of Bulgaria to the Slav provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also by the closeness of public and political contacts between the Bulgarian people and the national communities ruled by the Habsburg emperors, as well as by the tradition of economic and cultural exchange which had been going on throughout 19th century⁴. Due to its central position in Europe, the Danubian Empire, and its capital Vienna especially, became the point where the Oriental, West European and the Central European cultural planes intersected. In this sense, the Empire was a bridge for European cultural influences to the Balkans and Bulgaria.

After 1878, the Austro-Hungarian cultural penetration was openly encouraged by the nascent Bulgarian state where – unlike Serbia and Romania – it could not be associated with the immediate threat of territorial expansion, or meet with the animosity created by unsettled border disputes. Moreover, Central European culture was promoted in Bulgaria during the first decades of independence almost exclusively by Slav subjects of the Habsburg Emperor (Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes, etc.). On the other hand, by virtue of their ethnic origins, they did not try to impose the values they carried with them as an irreconcilable alternative to the predominantly Russophil sentiments of the Bulgarian public, but acted rather from considerations of Pan-Slavonic solidarity.

Czech lecturers shared ardently in their Bulgarian colleagues' efforts to build a firm reputation for the Higher School. Those efforts were not in vain, regardless of some sceptical opinions that were voiced here and there. I. Shishmanov and D. Agoura successfully challenged back in the articles they published during the early nineties. In more than one way, the ideas put forward in those articles merited the significance of major guidelines for the future development of the university.

Among Shishmanov's arguments in favour of the Higher School were not only the needs of the education system. With a breadth of vision he outlined the incomparable mission of the School in the mainstream of post-Ottoman Bulgarian culture and politics. As a prominent intellectual, he posited for it the future of a national university which would engage in the solving of educational, scientific and moral tasks. The latter, in Shishmanov's view, included to inculcate proper national feelings and to develop the idea of Bulgarian national reunification into a broad po-

litical platform that would renounce rampant chauvinism and embrace "every enlightened idea which guides the progress of Mankind."⁵

For his part, Agoura regarded the Higher School as the result of an indigenous outburst of intellectual energy. For him, having served as its rector, the School was the realization of a "popular dream" which, in its proper historical context, answered the national interests as it trained teachers, developed pure science, and encouraged public aspirations towards progress, as well as the nation's search for its cultural self among the other Balkan nations⁶.

The Ministry of Education generally shared the awareness of the School's social importance and, as a confirmation of that, it ratified in 1892 the establishment of a law department with 10 staff members and 94 students. The increasingly complicated process of administering the law, and the expanding civil service had obviously brought on the need to enlarge the legal profession which was deemed to have "no little importance for the good progress of the State."⁷ Moreover, the lectures were assigned to officials who were highly placed in the court hierarchy, which both secured a link between tuition and day-to-day legal practices, and provided the basis for theoretical studies in the field.

Tuition at the Higher School gradually adopted established university practices. More seminars, practical exercises and laboratory classes were added to the syllabus during the fifth academic year. The reasoning behind that decision was to provide students with opportunities to rely on their personal intellectual resources and to acquire certain practical skills. Laboratory equipment was purchased in France and Switzerland and rendered tuition at the Department of Physics and Mathematics more sophisticated. Eighteen honours graduates were granted the first scholarships for postgraduate studies abroad.

The quick progress of the new educational establishment necessitated certain changes in the relevant legislation. Guided by its newly acquired academic judgement, the Lecturers' Council insisted on a course of development that would "approximate the framework of German universities."⁸ Specific proposals referred to the system of examinations, to the regulations on academic personnel policy, syllabuses, etc. The Ministry itself was obviously satisfied as to the sound scientific rationale of the Council's proposals and later included most of them in the new Higher School Bill.

The new Popular Party government, which replaced Stambolov's cabinet in May, 1894, continued in the established favourable attitude towards the University and its development. Rather than a turning point

for it, the change at the top was an occasion to draw up the balance of the previous five years. In the course of that time the Higher School had managed to dispel every sporadic outburst of mistrust and to vindicate the idea of university education in Bulgaria. Its pioneers had succeeded in asserting the School's image as the highest acquisition of Bulgarian education in its dynamic process of build-up and modernization during the late eighties and early nineties of the last century.

V. Radoslavov, who headed the Ministry of Education in the new cabinet, also recognized the exceptional role of the Higher School as a single most important factor for the development of Bulgarian science, and of a new generation of Bulgarian intellectuals – for the cultural prestige of Bulgaria among the nations of South-East Europe. The new Higher School Act was deliberately aimed to support the initial success with provisions for “a national university” where the younger generations of Bulgaria would be “instructed and brought up in the true national spirit.”⁹

The new act subdivided the Higher School into three faculties: of history and philology, of physics and mathematics, and of law; there were also branches within each faculty. The establishment of faculties of theology and medicine was provided for in the foreseeable future. The duration of the courses was still set at three or four years, with the exception of medicine where it could be longer. The traditional academic structure of government was applied in full with a rector, deans, professors in ordinary and extraordinary, associate professors and assistant professors. In other words, the Higher School had come closer to a university proper.

The same tendency was furthered in the new university regulations which the Academic Council drafted and enacted during the 1896-97 academic year. The Regulations' articles confirmed the autonomous status of the establishment and further developed the academic framework. Secret ballot was adopted for membership of the governing bodies; special requirements for academic promotion were set down. The Regulations also prescribed the contents of syllabuses at the faculties, and fixed the rules for the establishment of departments at the discretion of Faculty Councils. Provisions for syllabuses, term, academic and professional practice examinations, full-time and part-time students all pointed to a modern teaching institution which could increasingly measure up to European standards. The makers of the Regulations looked farther ahead as well, and planned for the development of supplementary research facilities, such as a library, a botanical garden, special-purpose studies, and laboratories.

A special section referred to the academic status of students. They had the right to organize themselves only in scientific societies that must be free from any political bias. All meetings of students had to be initially authorized by the Academic Council. To eliminate party politics obviously meant more than just to uphold the traditional spirit of academic impartiality in these matters; the School's governing body aimed to isolate the students from the influence of self-seeking parliamentary manoeuvres during the nineties of the last century, as well as from socialist propaganda which, at that time, had already been started by certain intellectuals.

The students, however, could not have remained outside the stream of contemporary politics. Most of the School's undergraduates came from the hard-working strata of society and shared a keen interest in public matters, together with a strong democratic inclination. The "Science" undergraduate society, which was founded as early as 1891, became "a centre for the propagation of Marxist ideas about the organization of society."¹⁰ The same year saw the first students expelled by the Ministry on the grounds of having yielded to socialist propaganda. For their part, the rest of the students reacted in condemnation of certain reactionary ideas put forward by a lecturer at the Law Faculty, and demanded his resignation.

In 1894 the students took immediate part in the political unrest which the Stambolov regime had provoked. A number of them were expelled from the School on allegations of having participated in a conspiracy to depose Prince Ferdinand. In the following year the students organized a rally in defence of Bulgarians who were still under Turkish rule in Macedonia and the Edirne region of Thrace. Student demonstrations on the nationality question took place in 1897 as well. Those were ruthlessly crushed by the Bulgarian police.

The School's involvement with the national-liberation struggle of Bulgarians in Thrace and Macedonia went further than acts of protest. Many young people from the occupied Bulgarian territories graduated at the School's departments and faculties in the sound belief that it had gathered the intellectual elite of the nation, and gave birth to the most sophisticated and progressive ideas in both science and politics. A number of lecturers also came from Macedonia and the Edirne region and could not remain indifferent to the liberation struggle of their countrymen in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, lecturers and undergraduates from those parts of Bulgaria developed a unity of thought and action, which was entirely in agreement with the spirit of enlightened patriotism which informed

the Higher School's early years. A secret undergraduate society was set up "to struggle for liberation of Macedonia."¹¹ Calling itself *Книжовна дружина* ("The Literary Lot"), it could legally enjoy the support of lecturers, among them D. Agoura, L. Miletic, Y. Kovatchev and I. Georgov. Through the *Лоза* ("Vine") magazine, the society, which later changed its name to "The Young Macedonian Literary Lot", engaged in reunification propaganda in Macedonia and in the Edirne region in Thrace. Among the members of that society were students D. Grouev, G. Delchev, P. Poparsov, K. Shakhov, P. Toshev, D. Matev, A. Lyapchev, who later became prominent as leaders and organizers of the Bulgarian national liberation movement after 1878.

Strong student unrest marked, in the spring of 1897, the assassination of Aleko Konstantinov, the great Bulgarian satirist and progressive public figure. The students protested against partisanship and unscrupulous political practices in bourgeois Bulgaria. They demanded more civil rights for themselves. That political rebelliousness was provoked by the current political situation, but it was also the manifestation of original student mentality. The students regarded themselves as best representatives of the younger generation, and consequently felt justified in their campaign for personal freedom and respect for human rights. Eventually, the Academic Council had its way in the argument, but the unrests of the nineties demonstrated the adult public awareness of young Bulgarians, and the determination of the worthiest of them to have a rightful say in the nation's political affairs.

Around that time the public also launched a campaign for the admission of women to the Higher School. The Academic Council energetically took up the matter with the Ministry. Hundreds of young women signed the relevant appeal to Parliament. Opinions among Bulgarian intellectuals prevailed in their favour. The Minister of Education, K. Velichkov, submitted in Parliament an education-for-women bill. It proposed the establishment of general knowledge departments at secondary schools for girls to prepare candidates for higher education. The Higher School welcomed its first women students in 1901. Their presence in its lecture-halls came as if to confirm a conclusion made at the time by A. Theodorov-Ballan: the Bulgarian Higher School already had "its likes among the universities of Europe, and America."¹²

The second half of the nineties of the last century and the beginning of the 20th century marked a period of development at the Higher School in other directions as well. The staff was joined by new competent lecturers who were also eager to contribute extensively to the Bulgarian sci-

tific press. The faculties of History and Philology, and of Physics and Mathematics improved their curricula, and introduced degree subjects. The School Regulations elaborated more precisely on the status of various services at faculties. Procedures at seminars were also improved.

On the whole, the development of scientific services and seminar schemes marked another step towards a complete and steady academic framework. It was meant to stimulate students' ambitions for individual research efforts and to form relevant habits.

Other aspects of the framework also evolved visibly. The status of assistant professors was regulated; the Library was reorganized around new regulations as well. A group of enthusiasts started the collection of plants and minerals. The publication was started of the Higher School Yearbook; the first teaching guides and monographs by members of the University went to press.

The Academic Council was also concerned about the general level of Bulgarian science and took steps to revive the activities of the Bulgarian Literary Society. A series of studies by the University lecturers devoted to various branches of abstract and natural sciences appeared in the "Periodical Journal" which the Society published. Those were in no way inferior to academic writings which appeared in the "Collection of Folklore, Science and Letters" ("Сборник са народни умотворения, наука и книжнина") – then the most authoritative publication of its kind. The Academic Council manifested its intention to join together the forces of Bulgarian science and bring them to a European level. Indeed, that intention began to materialize with the reputation of consistent explorers, soon acquired by historian V.N.Zlatarski, geologist G.Bonchev, botanist S.Georgiev, jurist V.Baldjiev, and many others.

The general cultural prestige of the Higher School also rose. The governing body took a number of cultural initiatives of national importance, like the management of literary foundations, the publication of the "Bulgarian Fatherland", and the "Bulgarian Review" series, the organization of jubilee celebrations, etc. All those undertakings were moved by sincere patriotism and manifested a desire to uphold national interests, both within the boundaries of the Principality and in the territories still under Ottoman domination.

That patriotic tendency was most strongly pronounced in the scholarly pursuits of those academics (L.Miletic, A.Ishirkov, I.Georgov, V.Kunchov, A.Theodorov, I.Shishmanov) who studied the past and the present of Macedonia. They produced unquestionable scientific arguments to prove the Bulgarian ethnic identity of the occupied lands and

of their predominant population; they fought all attempts at perverting the ethnic make-up and the language of Bulgarians in Macedonia. All that can easily explain why a Macedono-Edirne undergraduate society was founded at the Higher School in 1897, and why, when the uprising of 1903 broke out in Macedonia and the Edirne region, many students were among its organizers, its leaders, and the victims of the bloodbath in which that heroic battle – in a row of heroic ones – ended.

* * *

The year 1904 marked the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Higher School. As the School's educational and scientific activities expanded, certain improvements of its structure naturally became necessary, together with some changes in the process of tuition. Obviously, the time had come for a final effort to bring the School on a par with contemporary universities. Moreover, Evlogi Georgiev, a prominent veteran of the Revival, had already sufficiently exemplified the public's desire to see that noble cause come to fruition by donating a considerable sum of money for the construction of a university building.

That desire was supported with ardent determination by Professor I. Shishmanov who had been appointed Minister of Public Education in 1903. As an academic, a consistent patriot and a broad-minded intellectual, Shishmanov contemplated a comprehensive cultural policy where plans for the Higher School figured prominently. Among the priorities were a proper building for the establishment, a new legislation to upgrade its status, higher academic remuneration, improved financial support for seminars, for the Library, and for field-work. The Minister knew well the meaning of public prestige and tradition, and saw to it that the 25th of November was officially declared Day of the Higher School. The relevant provision was laid down in the new Regulations of 1905, which also constituted the official seal of the establishment, bearing the engraved image of Kliment of Ohrid (the mediaeval Bulgarian educationalist), and the inscription: "Bulgarian University – Sofia". Before that, in 1902, the first honorary degree, Magister Jure, had been conferred on the first Bulgarian Exarch, Joseph I.

Professor Shishmanov's ideas took form in a far-reaching programme for an educational build-up which would maintain a balance between national traditions and foreign experience. On Oct. 1st, 1904 Parliament, after having considered the Minister's proposals, passed two closely related acts: the University Trust Act, and the University Act itself. The former, as stipulated in E. Georgiev's will, constituted the University

Trust which vested the University with the rights and duties of a body corporate under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The second act ruled to rename the Higher School Evlogi and Hristo Georgiev University.

More significantly, the new legislation provided the basis for the development of university education in the spirit of modern tendencies. The number of departments at the existing faculties increased. The establishment of new faculties and departments was provided for, according to current scientific and educational needs. New lecture courses were introduced. A series of provisions meant to guarantee the autonomy of the University, to stabilize the lecturers' position, and to secure conditions for active research initiative. The lecturers' hierarchy was finalized with professors (in ordinary and extraordinary), associate professors (permanent and part-time), lecturers, and assistant professors. Theses became a habilitation requirement for a permanent readership. During the full course of eight semesters undergraduates had to sit for examinations twice – following the fourth and the eighth semester. Doctor's degree was granted after a special examination. A substantial guarantee for the future was also held in the landed property of 10,200 square metres in downtown Sofia and the sum of 6,800,000 levs which the Georgiev brothers had left to the University Trust in their will.

Students, however, protested against the disciplinary code of the University, which had retained certain bureaucratic elements. The wave of protests reached its height in 1905. True to the spirit of democracy and to their desire for greater academic freedom, the students expressed condemnation of the Tzar's regime in Russia, and of some reactionary trends in Bulgarian politics.

The 1905 students' protests did not last long enough to affect in any significant way the upward tendency of the University's all-round development. Its lecturing staff rose quickly in number, gained in professionalism, and developed genuine academic attitudes. Thanks to official trips abroad, Bulgarian academics established closer contacts with their foreign counterparts. Those contacts allowed the Bulgarian academic community to gain awareness of foremost achievements in various branches of study. The University lecturers participated in international congresses of historians, petrographers, hygienists, demographers, archaeologists, educationalists, etc. The Ministry, under Ivan Shishmanov, deliberately encouraged those activities in the conviction that they could best serve to enhance the University's reputation among members of the international scientific community.

Teaching facilities also made a comparatively quick progress. By 1906 the Library had acquired almost 30,000 literary works in about 55,000 volumes¹³. New seminars and services were set up, and their efficiency improved. Undergraduate academic societies also functioned actively. A number of students won scholarships for post-graduate studies abroad. Another positive sign was the increasing number of graduates. In 1904 those were 480 men and 83 women, and the figures for 1906 were, respectively, 720 and 96.

Following the publication of the first volume of the University Yearbook, a number of smaller-format publications were set up, which accepted undergraduates' contributions as well. The University launched some special training schemes for certain branches of business and industry – a sign that it was becoming the centre of a wider educational interest. The same was being confirmed by the stream of cultural initiatives which the Academic Council took; among them were commemorative scientific conferences (devoted to the life and work of L.Karavelov, M.Drinov, F.Kanitz, Y.Strossmeier), events to promote the new spirit of friendship between Serbia and Bulgaria, popular science publications, etc.

The issues of the "Periodical Journal", the "Collection of Folklore, Science, and Letters", the "Bulgarian Collection", and the "Law Magazine" were all marked by the creditable scientific contributions of many university lecturers: historians and archaeologists V.N.Zlatarski, G.Katsarov, B.Yotsov, B.Filov; linguists A.Theodorov, L.Miletic, B.Tsonev; jurists S.S.Bobchev, S.Kirov, Y.Fadenchecht, M.Balabanov; geographer A.Ishirkov; mineralogist G.Bonchev; chemist P.Raikov; biologist S.Petkov; geologist G.Zlatarski, etc. Their scientific pursuits encouraged the rise of a whole category of Bulgarian intellectuals who were professionally involved in scientific research. The rise of the University meant the rise of modern Bulgarian science with the separate development of its branches.

However, in 1907 the future development of Sofia University was threatened by a serious crisis. Its roots were political. The ruling Popular Liberal (Stambolovist) Party had imposed a regime which in many ways resembled Stambolov's own repressive government of the recent past. Political violence was also encouraged by the autocratic regime of the Sovereign, Prince Ferdinand. So, when in early 1907 Ferdinand went to attend the inauguration of the National Theatre, he was received upon his arrival with catcalls from students and striking workers who saw in him the emblem of tyranny. The "Balkan Tribune" responded in the following way: "The Prince had expected honours but got disgrace... Such

demonstrations are signs of impending revolutionary bloodshed which has always served to awaken and educate oppressed and deprived nations.”¹⁴

That act of protest showed that the students regarded academic freedom in the broader context of political freedom, for which, given their keen sense of justice and democracy, they were also ready to fight. The atmosphere of political tension provoked the activity of the student branches of various opposition parties, and thus dragged the University into the vortex of political life. Many of the lecturers shared the students' discontent by virtue of their own political commitments.

The Government reacted by arresting and sending into internal exile some of the participants in the demonstration. The University was closed down. In protest, Professor Shishmanov handed in his resignation. There was indignation among the academics. Leading Bulgarian intellectuals like Ivan Vazov, Konstantin Velichkov, Naicho Tsanov, and many others joined in the protest. In a manifesto, entitled “To the Bulgarian Public”, the University professors declared their determination to act “until the whole truth is recognized, until the University is reopened and restored to its original autonomy, for that alone could satisfy its violated honour.”¹⁵

Stormy debates took place in Parliament. The opposition challenged the Government with the accusation that the royal edict to close down the University was unconstitutional. The members of the ruling party answered with the argument that the students' action had political implications, and had been influenced by socialist ideas. Under the pressure exercised by the ruling party, Parliament voted some amendments to the University Act, which substantially impaired the University's autonomy.

The academics launched another appeal to the public. Progressive politicians and intellectuals everywhere in the country sided with them. A separate “Appeal to the Citizens of Sofia Concerning the University Issue” was circulated as well.

The international scientific community also reacted in support of the Bulgarian professors. The ex-minister of education in Bulgaria K. Irecek published in a Munich newspaper an article in which he defended the rights of Sofia University. Academic circles in Russia and Serbia voiced their protest against the arbitrary act of the Bulgarian Government. The strong feeling of resentment which the incident had provoked among the European public did not allow the Government to replace dismissed Bulgarian lecturers with foreigners. Hastily appointed new Bulgarian profes-

sors obviously lacked the necessary qualifications, and immediately became the object of public ridicule.

As the crisis intensified, the dismissed professors appealed to the public once more. A mere 100 students enrolled for the 1907-08 academic year, and many lectures had to be called off. The Stambolovist government still refused to give way. However, in the general atmosphere of political tension, the University crisis had already spelt its doom. The new cabinet, headed by Alexander Malinov, took over in January, 1908.

The new Prime Minister, who was also leader of the Democratic Party, managed to soften political and social tensions by reliance on a stable economy. Malinov tried his best to avoid extreme measures, and kept a close watch on public reactions and on the turns and twists of party rivalries. He introduced a measure of political tolerance towards campaigners for democracy.

One of the first steps which had by the end of January demonstrated the change of policy, was the issuing of a Government decree which restored the formerly dismissed academics to their jobs; it authorized the Academic Council to take and cancel disciplinary action at its own discretion and required the Ministry to consult its opinion before proposing any changes of the 1904 University Act.

Lecturers and students had carried the day, due to their moral superiority over the Government, their staunch determination to uphold democracy and, last but not least, thanks to the whole-hearted support of progressive public opinion at home and abroad. On Feb. 1st, 1908, the formerly dismissed professors resumed their academic duties with the satisfaction of having gallantly fulfilled a higher one.

The years that followed were, for the University of Sofia, a time of steady progress. The list of lecturers was enlarged by the names of new arrivals: V. Ganev, A. Balabanov, D. Katsarov, I. Ivanov, etc. New vacancies were being opened almost on a monthly basis. The feasibility was being studied of a future faculty of technology. The Academic Council was engaged in a search for wider horizons and long-term solutions. Successive ministers of public education who, until the war period of 1912-18, were all university lecturers, also contributed to the firm establishment of the University. With the Proclamation of Independence, by which in 1908 Bulgaria finally broke away from Turkish sovereignty, every scientific and educational achievement of the University became even more a matter of national pride.

Restored academic traditions also experienced a progress. The seven degree courses materialized the logical necessity to differentiate between

sciences. That approach had the additional effect of steadily attracting greater numbers of young people every academic year during the pre-war period. The centralized scientific and educational framework of the University visibly became firmer.

As the academic institution developed, it naturally faced the need to have its legal status improved. Moreover, it was no longer a matter of the hierarchy which had been settled earlier as either institute-department-faculty or department-institute-faculty, i.e. along the model of West European universities. In a wider context, the need for change affected the entire education system and had been brought on by pressing problems of political and moral education. After the proclamation of its independence Bulgaria had started preparations for a war of national reunification against Turkey, and both the Government and the public had recognized, among other priorities, the task to secure an atmosphere of internal stability and to educate young Bulgarians in the spirit of patriotism and fidelity to the national cause. For its part, the Government saw the education system as the instrument that would best help to solve the task quickly and completely.

Having accurately assessed the situation, the Academic Council took the matter in hand. In a series of memoranda to the Ministry, it insisted on the introduction of such changes in the University's status as would help enhance its autonomy. The Minister sent back his own draft document. A debate ensued, which centered upon a single major point: the prerogatives of the Academic Council versus the power of the Ministry to limit them. The academics argued that, as a self-governing institution, the University should be granted authority, within specific budget limits, to change its own structure according to current needs. The Ministry, on the other hand, wanted to exercise that authority in its own right, and without having to consider available means and facilities. Essentially the same argument went on between the University of Sofia and bourgeois education authorities until the historical turning point of Sept. 9th, 1944. To define its source more precisely: it was constantly being provoked by the flagrant discrepancy between governments' intentions to put Bulgarian university education on a larger, even on a more democratic footing, and the meagre financial resources allocated for that purpose.

The new Public Education Act of 1909 devoted 65 of its articles to the problems of the University of Sofia. Preserving the current tendency, it provided for an increased number of departments: 20 at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, 18 at the Faculty of History and Philology, and 15 at the Faculty of Law. Part-time readerships could be granted freely

in order to enlarge the intellectual reserve of the future generation of professors. That personnel policy had produced marked results by the eve of the First Balkan War (1912–1913). At that time the University's teaching staff included 20 professors, 15 associate professors, 9 part-time associate professors, 6 lecturers, and 17 assistant professors. For the only university of a small country those figures spoke a lot.

The new Act also finally affirmed the principle of scientific eligibility of applicants for a permanent professorship. Efforts to assert the University's autonomy had also resulted in provisions which gave the Academic Council exclusive powers to appoint lecturers, and to dismiss or take any other disciplinary action against them. Those prerogatives were nobly meant to create a calm environment for teaching and research, and to protect the academic staff from arbitrary acts of bureaucracy.

The atmosphere of relaxation, which set in at the University after the passing of the Act, allowed the Academic Council to work out new comprehensive regulations of academic structure, functions, and teaching procedures. It should be noted, however, that all previous provisions remained valid which prohibited students to engage in any political activity, and restricted their freedom of opinion even on matters of government education policies.

Nevertheless, the new Act had, on the whole, opened wider opportunities for the development of the University. It widened the scope of teaching and research done there, and allowed the educational establishment a greater say in government and cultural politics. As preparations for war had gone well under way, some members of the University were moved by their patriotism to a measure of political outspokenness which went beyond traditional academic attitudes, and those of them, like T.Danailov, V.Mollov and S.S.Bobchev, who rather contemplated a career in politics, were forced by the circumstances to hand in their resignations.

On the eve of the wars academic publishing also became more active. The first four issues of the "University Library" series came out in 1913. Those were original works and translations by members of the teaching staff, but undergraduates also had access to publication.

The tide of general enterprise encouraged the Academic Council to take up the matter of establishing a faculty of rural economy and a department of pharmacology at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, as the new University Act decreed. Unfortunately, financial and personnel problems slowed down the process.

That unsolved matter again drew attention to the wider problem of teaching facilities. The new degree courses attracted a steadily growing number of students. The figures for 1910 were 1033 men and 278 women. The old university building was becoming too overcrowded. However, plans to construct a new building could not be carried out while the wars lasted, both because of war-time complications and because of the controversy which had developed around the Georgievs' legacy.

When it broke out in 1912, the First Balkan War disrupted the academic routine. Most undergraduates and lecturers were mobilized to fight for the national cause against the Ottoman Empire. Teaching and research activities were resumed at the University during the early spring of 1913, but with a strongly reduced number of staff and students, and constant budget cuts. As a true sign of the time's greatness and of the prevailing high public spirit, lecturers were prepared to travel days from the frontline in order to meet thinned academic audiences. When in the summer of 1913 the short Second Balkan War broke out between the former allies against the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria was forced to fight on three fronts simultaneously against Serbia, Greece and Romania, the walls of the University reverberated with heated discussions on the national question. The politicization of academic life became especially pronounced after the defeat which Bulgaria suffered at the hands of its former allies. For their part, academic experts in the field of Balkan politics took the defence of the Bulgarian case against hostile Western propaganda.

Tuition was not brought to normal during the 1913–14 academic year, either. Small lecture-halls could not seat all the demobilized students. The fulfilment of syllabuses was disrupted. Nevertheless, students and lecturers alike did their best to remain worthy of their cultural mission which had acquired a deep national significance in the middle of wartime hardship.

In the autumn of 1915 Bulgaria entered the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria. Again, the prospects for national reunification were put forward by ruling bourgeois politicians as the major reason to reopen hostilities. However, the previous two consecutive wars had sapped the nation; its patriotic zeal had somewhat been damped by the first national catastrophe which the defeat in the Second Balkan War had meant for it.

In spite of all that, however, in the summer of 1916 the academic community celebrated 1,000 years from the birth of its symbolic patron Kliment of Ohrid. In the same year, lecturers and students who had not been

called up to the front, organized the first "Cyril and Methodius Matinée", the prototype of later pageants held each year on the 24th of May as a popular tribute to the two brothers who invented the Slavonic alphabet.

Classes were not interrupted during the academic year of 1916–17 in spite of commandeered premises, shortened timetables, and twice reduced staff. If anything, those obstacles developed professional resourcefulness and strengthened the staff's determination to serve public interests in the field of education.

The Faculty of Medicine was opened a year later. The idea had been around since the late 19th century, and had continually been brought up by the crying want of medical practitioners and the consequent low quality of health services in Bulgaria. A considerable role in that respect had also been played by wartime needs of medical officers. Relevant provisions had been made in the 1909 Public Education Act, and on their basis the Faculty of Medicine began to function in the spring of 1918.

By the end of the First World War, the University of Sofia had achieved a general recognition as a distinguished teaching and research establishment. There was a visible trend of moving closer to international currents of thought, of trying to break the boundaries of strictly national or regional scientific concerns. That trend was chiefly manifested by the younger and rather prolific generation of lecturers, like mathematician L.Chakalov, medievalist Professor V.N.Zlatarski, historian of philosophy Professor I.Georgov, students of Slavonic languages L.Miletic and M.Aranaoudov, jurist V.Ganev, chemist G.Koloushki, physicist professor A.Hristov, founder of Bulgarian petrography Professor G.Bonchev, etc.

In the final analysis, one should agree with historians of Bulgarian culture who have defined the year 1918 as a watershed between two epochs in the rise of Sofia University. The first one spanned the time from its birth and early days as the Higher School, through to the establishment of its modest academic image, typical of the general situation in Balkan culture, education, and ideology at the time. After the First World War, the Bulgarians' Alma Mater tried successfully to build its reputation among the European academic elite, and grew to become one of the best Balkan universities – a national temple of science and education.

Chapter 3

THE DEFENCE OF ACADEMIC AUTONOMY

Beginning in 1918, Bulgaria fell in the grips of a heavy post-war crisis. As the defeated side, it had sustained a second national catastrophe. Its post-war history was permanently beset by economic chaos, by the drastic polarization of its society, and the collapse of its national reunification ideals. The situation was made even worse by territorial losses and the burden of enormous reparations. Domestic politics were severely afflicted by crisis. The lower working strata of society had lost faith in the political doctrines of the established bourgeois parties which were responsible for the country's defeat and the hard problems of post-war years. In such circumstances, the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and the Bulgarian Agrarian Party (BZNS) naturally became more influential as political representatives of the working class and the peasantry. They rose to the forefront of political life as the strongest and the best organized parties at a time when the country was in the grips of a revolutionary crisis and was being drawn into the global current of revolutionary transformation.

Naturally, the hardship of post-war years affected the development of Sofia University. Dwindling budgets faced it with a number of problems, relating to teaching facilities, new vacancies and research projects. In due consideration of those circumstances, the Academic Council looked for its own ways and means to keep the highest teaching institution on the upward path of development. During the early post-war years such efforts were responsible for definitely positive results in the structuring and management of tuition.

The University's four faculties (History and Philology, Physics and Mathematics, Law, and Medicine) launched some new degree courses and set up new departments. Some departments were granted to Russian emigrés of international scientific reputation. The 1921–22 academic year saw the long-delayed establishment of the Faculty of Rural Economy. During that time the new Public Education Act laid down provisions for two more faculties – of veterinary medicine and of theology. Thus, at the end of the 1922–23 academic year the Bulgarian University had seven

faculties and a total of 111 departments. In structure, disciplines taught and branches of research, it had become almost the same as the most highly advanced European universities.

The structure of academic government was also gradually improved to enhance the traditional broad public prestige of the academic profession. Finally, the hierarchy included the Academic Council, the faculty councils, the offices of rector, pro-rector, dean, and pro-dean. Each year, on Dec. 8th (O.S. Nov. 25th), Patron St. Kliment's of Ohrid Day, the pro-rector delivered a report on the previous academic year and introduced the rector elect. The latter read a paper on his field of study to a selected audience of leading politicians, cultural and public personalities.

Partially overcoming the persistent lack of finance, the governing body managed to provide an almost uninterrupted increase of the teaching staff by two or three members annually for each discipline. That naturally raised the quality of tuition, widened research opportunities and ensured the continuity between older and younger generations of academics. By the end of the 1922–23 academic year the teaching staff numbered 132 (52 professors in ordinary, 18 professors extraordinary, 35 permanent and 21 part-time associate professors, 6 lecturers, 73 assistant professors); 8 of the total number were women¹.

The number of undergraduates also rose quickly. Initially, the steady growth each year of newly admitted students was disturbed by the demobilization and the typical post-war epidemics. However, the tendency soon recovered, and in 1918 it tripled the number recorded in the 1911–12 pre-war academic year. A total of 7,232 students were admitted to the University in 1919, which was then the highest figure recorded in the history of Alma Mater.

There were a number of factors which accounted for that substantial growth. To begin with, there were the secondary school leavers of seven consecutive years, who had been mobilized in the wars, but could not choose to take up higher studies. Then, many of the new students were former army officers who had been made redundant in compliance with the Neuilly Peace Treaty which had decreed a considerable reduction of Bulgarian armed forces. The new enrolment procedure, regulated by the 1919 Public Education Act, also allowed for a higher number of students. Graduates of grammar and semi-grammar schools were admitted first; then, an additional examination was held for graduates of modern and other secondary schools. For the first time ever, among the undergraduates were former pupils of special training and vocational schools, whose presence at the University was a sign of greater educational demo-

cracy. Given the fact that after the war Bulgaria had fallen in a state of international isolation, many young people who would otherwise have chosen to study abroad also applied for tuition at Sofia University. Finally, one should not ignore the desire of the younger members of the Bulgarian war generation to reach a higher level of education which, in the new atmosphere of recurrent economic crises and general social instability, could secure a better life-style and higher chances of professional survival.

In the years that followed, however, governments imposed restrictions on the number of annually admitted students, forced either by the lack of finance, or by the small capacity of available buildings. The drop was also due to the high fees for education. Still, among the separate faculties, those of law and medicine continued to attract the largest number of applicants because degrees from them were accompanied by better career prospects.

Curricula, on the other hand, reflected the efforts of the University's governing body to provide training both for practical purposes and for pure research. The same was behind the compulsory requirement of attendance at lectures and seminar classes, and behind the encouragement of amateur activities in undergraduate societies, like the Society of Letters and Linguistics which was among the busiest. Unfortunately, a serious obstacle in the way of those efforts was the lack of textbooks.

During the difficult post-war period research projects at the University were not allowed to lag behind, nor were contacts with the international scientific community broken. The Academic Council was engaged in a constant confrontation with the Ministry of Education and with other government offices which would not allow it a free hand in the management of those important branches of academic activity. A sign of progress in that field was the fact that during the 1921-22 academic year the periodicals "Sofia University Yearbook", "Proceedings of the Slavonic Philology Seminar", "Geological Map of Bulgaria" and "University Library" published a total of 192 works by staff members and undergraduates, and edited an additional 81 for publication².

Closely related to the research projects were faculty institutes and seminars in their capacity as auxiliary academic units. During the post-war period their activities, especially those in the fields of physics and mathematics, medicine and rural economy, registered a rapid progress. Donations and purchases of books allowed the University Library to grow as well.

The wider dissemination of knowledge by the teaching staff went parallel to their immediate professional efforts. In the spring of 1921 a number of lecture cycles formed the framework of the Popular University which began to attract the interest of people from all walks of life. A number of lectures were read elsewhere in the country as well. Far from being advocates of elitism, the members of the academic community upheld the principles of educational democracy handed down to them from the Revival period, and did their best to establish the University as national centre of learning.

To avoid any form of parochialism, the University of Sofia also tried to develop a wide range of contacts with foreign counterparts. Field-work and post-graduate studies abroad, exchange of lecturers with European universities, participation in international scientific fora – those were the major elements of that policy during the period. There too, the Academic Council was constantly up against intractable government officials. In 1920 the Council of Ministers resolved to put an end to academic trips abroad. The decision provoked a storm of protests, and eventually the academics' determination to see their infringed autonomy restored forced the Government to cancel its decree.

As a result, links of cooperation between Sofia University and the scientific communities of Austria, Great Britain, Germany, France and Czechoslovakia grew stronger. Members of the Faculty of Rural Economy exchanged information with their colleagues in Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy. Members of the Faculty of History and Philology took part in regular competitions for the three-year Marin Drinov Scholarship, in honour of the prominent Bulgarian historian. For outstanding achievements in teaching and research during his stay in Paris, professor Yordan Ivanov was decorated with the French Cross for Science and Art³.

Compared with research and scientific exchange, what reequipment and welfare work was done at the University during the post-war period was extremely inadequate. The following figures speak for themselves: during the academic year of 1919–1920, 7,232 students attended classes in 16 lecture-halls and 30 smaller rooms⁴. The construction of new premises was long overdue. Protests registered with the Government by successive Academic Councils and rectors resulted in virtually no progress. The teaching staff felt increasingly frustrated by that policy of unfairly ignoring the importance of their work and of the material support it needed. Worst affected by that lack of concern on the part of the Government were the faculties of medicine (human and

veterinary), and the Faculty of Rural Economy, where tuition required largest amounts of technical equipment.

Bourgeois education authorities were unable to provide adequate salaries for the teaching staff and for other University employees. Student grants also remained low. Staff and students appealed collectively to Parliament for an improvement of their financial situation, but to no effect.

Allocations to the University funds were also very small. The research fund formed an exception, only because it did not depend directly on government subsidies.

Academic finances were additionally disturbed in the course of rows and disagreements between the University and the majority BZNS government which came to power in 1920. The BZNS had a lower middle-class democratic stand in politics, and its government carried out a series of progressive reforms. It insisted, however, on a rather hard-line education policy. The cabinet practically refused to recognize the University's autonomy, ignored most of the Academic Council's demands, and thus managed to antagonize the entire academic community. Most of the members of the teaching staff, who shared the typical prejudices of middle class intellectuals, could not have sympathized with a BZNS government as a matter of principle; they protested at the smallest provocation, refused to obey cabinet decisions, and generally did their bit for the worsening of relations between the state authorities and the University.

The bones of contention ranged widely: competitive examinations for lecturers, education fees and the related restrictions on the number of students, allegations exchanged between the Rector and Education Minister S. Omarchevski, actions taken by the Ministry to dismiss University employees without the prior consent of the Academic Council, decreed changes of standard Bulgarian spelling, the Minister's tactless interference in the drafting of the General University Regulations, and so on. At the beginning of 1922 matters were referred to the Supreme Administrative Court. The broadest public opinion sided with the University. A new academic crisis was in the air. The police were forced to disperse a large student demonstration⁵.

In April 1922, the Academic Council resolved to suspend classes at the University. Meetings in protest against the Government's academic policy were held in all parts of the country. Almost every political party expressed its support for the University. The Government was forced to give way and look for a compromise. Beginning in the summer of 1922, the crisis was gradually settled in the course of negotiations between the Ministry and the Academic Council, which ended in agreement on a

number of points. Alma Mater had triumphantly closed another important chapter in its struggle for autonomy, against the rude interference of the administration in its internal affairs.

* * *

During the 1923–29 period Sofia University achieved the highest quality of development in its history before the 9th of September, 1944. The period was characterized by the comparatively rapid expansion and consolidation of the University as a national centre of academic education and research.

The economy of Bulgaria moved out of its post-war stagnation and made some headway which allowed a considerable increase in the amount of government spending on the development of academic activities. The revolutionary crisis died down as well. In 1923, the extreme right wing of the Bulgarian middle class crushed the two popular antifascist uprisings, in June and September, and thus ensured its undivided rule over political and economic life. The subsequent period of general stability normally gave rise to a greater demand for university graduates to consolidate further the new establishment. The latter was becoming increasingly fascist in its outlook, and favoured the idea of a hereditary intellectual elite, which politically resulted, among other things, in new privileges for the academic community. The positive byproduct of that form of political bribery was the University's further growth as a teaching institution and a centre of scientific research in Bulgaria.

The construction of the main new university premises (the Rector's Office) started in the summer of 1924, after the design of French architect Bréasson and Bulgarian architect Y. Milanov's layout. When the new structure was completed in 1934, it had 15 lecture-halls out of a total number of 89 rooms, some of which had been in use since 1931. The construction also went ahead during that time of the new University Library and of new premises for the faculties of veterinary medicine and rural economy. Additional funds were allocated for the construction of the Students' Hall designed to provide lodgings for undergraduates of low family income. That large building programme, however, did not solve the acute problem of inadequate teaching facilities for the faculties of physics and mathematics, and medicine.

Material improvements at the University provided the ground for a further upgrading of its social status. Progress in that direction was made with the new Public Education Act, and the respective University Regulations of 1924. Genuine academic order was established within the total

of 104 departments at the seven university faculties (a department of forestry was added to the Faculty of Rural Economy in 1925); life at Alma Mater and the professional standing of its teaching staff were provided with legal guarantees in the framework of traditional academic principles.

As public confidence in the education authorities was restored, the University regained its attraction for a growing number of young men and women. The winter semester of 1923–24 was attended by 2,013 undergraduates (1,511 men and 502 women). Five years later, during the 1928–29 academic year, their number reached 4,162 (2,958 men and 1,204 women). That, however, was less than the actual demand for higher education which Sofia University could not afford yet to meet in full. A considerable number of young Bulgarians still went to study abroad, chiefly medicine.

The figures for graduates also grew. During the above five-year period, 1,671 young professionals graduated at Sofia University, which formed a sound testimony to rising standards of academic tuition. Thus, it would be wrong to conclude that the Academic Council was moved by an excess of self-confidence when, in 1924, it resolved to grant the degree of doctor to graduates at the Faculty of Medicine. The decision can only be interpreted as a sign of professional realism when the qualifications of foreign and Bulgarian medical graduates were compared.

Certain other proportions of quantity are as interesting to quote. The majority of graduates during that period had done law at the University, which was a sign that the State continued to experience an acute shortage of legal and administrative personnel. The number of foreign undergraduates was rather small while the preoccupation with national concerns was still largely predominant at Sofia University. Women undergraduates, on the other hand, became more numerous, which demonstrated the growing emancipation of women in Bulgaria, and the significant role which, as a teaching institution, the University had to play in that process. However, both men and women of rural background were few among the undergraduates. That situation was obviously due to the fact that the farming communities were generally poorer and more conservative than the industrial ones.

If one takes quantity to be the first sign of development, then the twofold and threefold increases registered by the different categories of teaching staff during the 1924–29 period speak for themselves. In absolute terms, however, that growth lagged behind the growth in the number of undergraduates, and was consequently inadequate for the normal

process of tuition. The teaching of foreign languages provides a good illustration. There the staff tripled from six to eighteen, and still, in 1927 the pro-rector concluded: "The benefit of proficiency in foreign languages and the demand for it are so obvious that we need not think twice before we resolve to double the number of lecturers."⁶

During the 1927–28 academic year only 15 out of 60 full-time professors were foreigners (thirteen Russian, one French, one German), which clearly demonstrated a strong national academic potential. The presence, on the other hand, of a number of talented Russian academics made Sofia unique among the rest of Slavonic universities for its bilingual tuition.

During the second half of the 1920-ies the Bulgarian public shared broadly the opinion that the University of Sofia could rightly claim the privilege of having attracted the most outstanding of Bulgarian scientists and educationalists. The list of professors and associate professors on the main lecture courses during that time provided a convincing evidence in support of that claim: philosophers D.Mihalchev, S.Kazandjiev and I.Gergov; students of pedagogics D.Katsarov and P.Tsonev; historians P.Nikov, V.N.Zlatarski, G.I.Katsarov, B.Filov and P.Moutafchiev; philologists A.Theodorov-Ballan, L.Miletic, S.Romanski, S.Mladenov, I.Shishmanov, M.Arnaoudov, Y.Ivanov, A.Balabanov, B.Penev, K.Galabov and T.S.Tomov; members of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics A.Hristov, K.Popov, N.Obreshkov and L.Chakalov; chemists Z.Karaouglanov, D.Balarev, P.N.Raikov and I.Stranski; biologists N.Arnaoudov, S.Petkov and G.Shishkov; geologists G.Bonchev and S.Bonchev; geographers Zh.Radev and Y.Kovatchev; jurists S.Kirov, S.S.Bobchev, P.Stainov, P.Stoyanov, V.Ganchev and D.Mishaikov; students of medicine V.Mollov, V.Alexiev, S.Kirkovitch, D.Orakovats and D.Stamatov; students of veterinary medicine D.Bliznakov, S.Anghelov and M.Ratchev; rural economists I.Hlebarov, I.T.Stranski, Y.Mollov.

The majority of them had graduated at distinguished European universities and commanded an exceptional public prestige. Their efforts for the progress of science and for the public weal left indelible traces in the annals of Bulgarian academic history.

Credit goes to that eminent team of scholars also for the fact that the University of Sofia became the single major centre of Bulgarian scientific research. Medical scientists, physicists, historians and mathematicians were engaged during that time in research which approached European standards. The same held true for the works and teaching aids which they

published, and which pushed forward the development of Bulgarian science and university education. A new procedure of granting doctorates was established at the University in 1928. Young Bulgarian scholars no longer needed to submit their doctoral theses abroad, which also served to establish firmly the reputation of Bulgarian science.

During the same period the quality of research at Sofia was for the first time broadly acknowledged by the international scientific community. S.S.Bobchev, L.Miletic, B.Tsonev, V.N.Zlatarski and some others were elected members of academies and scientific societies abroad. A considerable number of Bulgarian academics were welcome and respected guests at international congresses, symposia and conferences. At the congress of Byzantine scholars, held in Belgrade in 1927, the 13-member Bulgarian delegation was the largest. Bulgarian academics were invited more often abroad, either as visiting lecturers or as postgraduate students. For its part, Sofia University could now afford to return the gesture, and thanks to its growing prestige attracted a number of world-famous professors who came to give talks or to read lectures. The University Library, which in 1928 possessed 157,456 volumes and 575 editions of foreign magazines, also contributed in its way to the widening international contacts of the University. It had established links of exchange with libraries in Leipzig, Vienna, Paris, Warsaw, Vilna, Krakow, Brno, Bratislava, Belgrade, Yasi, Upsala, Strasbourg, Ottawa, Washington, New York, etc. The attention of libraries abroad was attracted to it by its valuable collections of books donated by a number of university professors.

By comparison with that rather brisk teaching and research activity, the University's participation in national politics during the 1923-29 period was less clearly defined. In the aftermath of the suppressed revolutionary upheaval, the academics found it wisest to avoid open political commitments. Only a small circle of them, mostly jurists, supported the antidemocratic regime of Prime Minister Alexander Tsankov, a fellow-professor of theirs. No member of the academic community was willing to become an ideological spokesman of fascism. The majority of the teaching staff remained inclined towards the traditional values of middle-class democracy. Due to all that, the University's governing body continued to tolerate progressive attitudes in members of the staff and students; it permitted theoretical discussions and encouraged efforts in the branches of natural and exact sciences which, if at all, could least be interpreted in a political way.

Open scientific discourses, running of popular scientific publications, commemorative celebrations – those were the main lines of public activity in which the academic staff engaged during the period between 1923 and 1929. The undergraduates campaigned for a reduction of education fees, and participated in the activities of undergraduate academic societies which they tried to politicize, given the fact that most of them came from lower and lower middle-class backgrounds.

* * *

The economic crisis that plagued the world between 1929 and 1933, dealt a heavy blow on the Bulgarian economy and seriously affected public life and culture. Growing class tensions gave rise to unbridled political strife which generally destabilized the internal situation.

Political undercurrents rose to the surface, which were essentially leading the system away from fascism. A Popular Bloc government was formed in 1934. Its rule has gone down in history as an antireactionary breakthrough. The new cabinet represented a broad political coalition which favoured middle-class democratic methods of government.

That complicated state of affairs had various effects on the development of the University of Sofia. On the one hand, the liberalization of public life encouraged a new wave of political outspokenness which rapidly engulfed academic ranks. On the other hand, the economic crisis resulted in budget cuts which threatened to bring the normal development of the University to a halt.

As early as 1929 financial difficulties sparked off disagreements between the education authorities and the University's governing body. The Academic Council argued, with good reason, that budget cuts would disrupt building projects, hamper supplies of basic teaching aids and necessitate a reduction of salaries. The following is a quotation from an academic memorandum sent to the Ministry in 1929: "Undergraduates attend lectures in rooms completely unsuited for the purpose and practise exercises in extremely unhygienic laboratories which are too small and cannot be ventilated adequately. That being the case, the undergraduates' health is being constantly put at risk, and is finally wasted."⁷

After a hard battle, additional funds were allocated for the completion of the main academic premises (the Rector's Office) which had been under construction for almost a decade. The year 1934 saw the official ceremony of inauguration which took place at the gates of the building where a plaque had been mounted for the occasion, inscribed with the names of the University's benefactors Evlogi and Hristo Georgiev. Work

also went ahead on the Students' Hall but was very soon halted due to financial difficulties.

The budget issue was constantly on the agenda of arguments between the University and the authorities. The Ministry insisted on cutting down the teaching staff and the number of students. The Academic Council regarded that policy as an effective encroachment upon its autonomy of decision concerning personnel needs. Again, there was talk of suspending classes as an act of protest. The academic community generally shared the opinion that the imposition of budget cuts entailed a whole series of decisions which the Academic Council would have to adopt against its better judgement, and, ultimately, in contradiction with the principles of its autonomy.

In the middle of persistent financial and political insecurity, the Academic Council still managed somehow to come up with timely and feasible solutions to current problems of higher education. Regulations were improved relating to the admission of new students, undergraduates' examinations, the status of assistant professors, the number of teaching hours assigned to individual members of the staff, etc. Sub-degree courses were organized at the faculties of history and philology, and physics and mathematics for the first time in 1932. That measure was designed to improve the graduates' career prospects as secondary school teachers.

A substantial new acquisition for the University, and for the Bulgarian economy in general, was the Institute of Business Forecasts whose establishment at the Law Faculty had been proposed by the Rockefeller Foundation. The Botanic Garden, and the Aquarium in the city of Varna were attached to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. The Faculty of Medicine could use facilities at the Alexander Hospital; the Faculty of Rural Economy and Forestry acquired the Institute of Zootechnics; and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was given assistance by the Veterinary Clinic.

Between 1929 and 1934 the number of students at the University rose steadily (the respective figures for the beginning and the end of the period were 4,162 and 7,000). The rates of that increase, however, were much lower than those of the preceding period, which was definitely the result of government-imposed financial restrictions. The teaching staff rose only by a minimum, with the number of assistant professors dropping by more than one third. Altogether, the Academic Council did not give in to ministerial pressure for a sharp reduction of the academic staff. In spite of the difficulties, it encouraged the rising talents of jurists D. Silyanovski

and N. Dolapchiev, physicists G. Nadjakov and N. Bonev, medical scientist A. Hadjiolov, etc.

The reduction of government spending on education also affected academic research. To support that line of its activity the Academic Council had to rely on private donations. The University's research fund was used for the granting of annual awards to outstanding students, and, more importantly, also for material incentives and support to a number of research projects.

The "Sofia University Almanac, 1888–1928" came out in 1929 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Alma Mater. The eight academic year-books continued to be published on a regular basis. The "University Library" series continued as well. In 1934, its founders could already take pride in a total of 145 publications – monographs and lecture courses – since 1924.

Bulgarian academics also published abroad. During the 1933–34 academic year an unprecedented number of 65 Bulgarian articles were published in 20 distinguished foreign journals. Scientific communities in Europe and the United States did justice to those works for their original ideas and high quality of research. One cannot be surprised then, that since 1929 more than 40 Bulgarian professors had achieved international recognition as honorary and corresponding members of foreign academies and scientific societies.

The lack of finance, however, restricted the participation of the Bulgarian academic community in that other form of international scientific exchange – congresses, symposia, and conferences. During the 1932–33 academic year, 16 Bulgarian professors and assistant professors participated at their own expenses in nine international meetings of scientists. Nevertheless, the governing body of Sofia University put in much enthusiasm, and raised the money it needed to host the First Balkan Conference in 1932, and then in 1934, the Fourth Congress of Byzantine Studies. Such events were regarded by the scientific community, and by the entire Bulgarian public, as culturally important and beneficial to the prestige of the nation; so much so, that in order to confirm the wider significance of international scientific contacts Sofia University actually boycotted the Third Congress of Slavonic Geography and Ethnography, whose host in 1930 was Belgrade University, in protest against the policy of the Yugoslav monarchy with respect to the Bulgarian population in the Vardar region of Macedonia.

During the 1929–34 period the activities of the University Library as a centre for the international exchange of scientific information also suf-

ferred from the heavy financial situation. That valuable book depository was itself overcome by something of a crisis when it started to experience a shortage of new publications, and also, paradoxically maybe, a lack of adequate storing facilities. It was not until the 1934-35 academic year that a certain return became possible to the previous scale of book purchasing, and that some additional store-rooms were made available.

The economic crisis and the rising cost of living during that period provoked student unrests and strikes. In the winter of 1931 the "Students' Banner" newspaper wrote the following: "The overwhelming majority of students live below the poverty line where enough food and decent shelter are considered a luxury... The average low annual family income of students is lower than 3,400 levs and the education fees of 300 levs prove an impossible burden for most parents."⁸ The students demonstrated against high fees, against the poor organization of training at future employers' and against the imposed restrictions on the number of candidates admitted annually to the University. During the first half of the 1930-ies the students' economic demands were a major troublesome problem for the administration and Parliament, given the fact that there were already signs of a political orientation showing through that spontaneous discontent. Thus ended 15 years of post-war academic development; the period had been largely successful both in terms of educational and research activities. It ended, however, on a note of discord which spelt a turbulent and demanding future.

* * *

On May 19th, 1934, King Boris III signed a decree by which he appointed the government of Kimon Georgiev, leader of the Zveno political circle. The latter had staged a successful coup d'état, and intended to govern in the name of fascist ideas. The economic crisis had once more weakened the credibility of traditional middle-class policies, and in the ensuing political vacuum the extreme right had gained the upper hand.

The change of government immediately cast a shadow over public education. The new regime introduced austerity measures which meant above all a large-scale dismissal of civil servants, and reduced wages and pensions. The University's budget, although it had been already passed, was revised and cut down. Since the summer of 1934 one problem became fixed on the agenda of consecutive Academic Council meetings: the Ministry had ruled the merging of so called parallel departments at separate faculties as a result of which many members of the teaching staff were made redundant, or forced to retire.

Speaking in his annual report in 1934 about "the hardships which Bulgarian professors suffer in their work"⁹, the rector, Professor L. Dikov meant also restrictions of admission to the University which the new Minister had imposed. That measure had been more than a pretext to cut down the academic budget; it threatened to disturb the natural continuity between generations of undergraduates, and to limit the scope of selection for future appointments to academic departments and institutes.

The neglecting of the University's real financial needs during the monarcho-fascist dictatorship hindered all other academic activities as well. The magnificent new structure which housed the Rector's Office did little to solve one of the major problems at Sofia University – the shortage of convenient and modern teaching facilities. Students of chemistry at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics worked under the daily hazard of explosion and mass poisoning in the couple of ramshackled buildings which housed their laboratories. The research fund was no longer sufficient, the Library also faced financial difficulties. Prize students could not always rely on their reduced prizes. In the summer of 1935, the Council of Ministers imposed a stricter bureaucratic control over the distribution of grants, and in fact abolished them as free ones. Even the renewed patriotic initiative to commission a monument of St. Kliment of Ohrid, who was officially proclaimed patron saint of the University on Feb. 6, 1935, soon had to be dropped because the donations which only the municipal government of Sofia, the Holy Synod and the teaching staff contributed to the project were too small.

It would not be reasonable to account for the budget cuts only by the state of government finances. After 1935 Bulgaria experienced an economic recovery which to a great extent eliminated the consequences of the recent world economic crisis. Until the Second World War the country was spared the hardships of the new decline which hit most capitalist economies. A growth of the national income was visible as Bulgaria was now tied up with the dynamic and increasingly militarized economies of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

As the monarcho-fascist dictatorship grew stronger, it invested mainly in the reorganization and rearmament of the army, in the expansion of the police force, and in the establishment of new antipopular institutions of its power. On the other hand, Bulgarian fascism regarded as alien to its class nature all democratic, scientific and cultural institutions, among which the University occupied a leading position. Larger state subsidies for such institutions would have meant a potential threat

to the dictatorship – the proliferation of intellectual forces whose combined genius had always participated in the frontline of opposition to reactionary policies and retrograde ideas.

During the second half of the 1930-ies Sofia University continued through the representation of the Academic Council to struggle actively against all regulations which successive governments of the dictatorship issued in violation of its autonomy. Ministerial rulings to increase the number of lecturers' teaching hours, to close down departments and reduce the staff became the target of general academic indignation which was shared by unassuming assistant professors, and eminent professors alike. In particular, the academic community reacted very strongly against the government decision of late 1935 to merge three university funds (for research, for prizes, and the special Rural Economy Fund of 1927) with the general budget funds of the Ministry of Public Education. That incompetent step, which also ran counter to functioning university laws and regulations, entailed the arbitrary distribution of the funds in question which were generated above all from education fees, and donations made currently, or by will. In other words, the Government meant to deprive the University of its most solid means to support its research, publishing, international exchange, etc.

In the end, the persistent opposition of the Academic Council, the appeals sent to the Prime Minister, and the threatened suspension of classes had their effect, and the University remained in possession of its funds. Thanks to the same active response, some departments and some jobs were also saved. In the autumn of 1938, the Ministry finally gave in to the strong academic pressure, and granted some of the money needed for the new premises of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics.

The action of the University's governing body had once again testified to its civil courage and intellectual impartiality in keeping with the best traditions of the Bulgarian democratic intelligentsia. The fascist regime had failed in its intention to deprive the University of its identity and to reduce it to political subservience, as it had tried to do with primary and secondary schools. Bulgarian academics consistently defended the autonomy of their Alma Mater from the authoritarian financial and organizational experiments of the fascist monarchy.

As has already been said, the dictatorship was not interested in encouraging the number of university students to grow. Statistical data for the period between 1934 and the year the Second World War began demonstrate a steady downward tendency. Before the decisive advent of fascism the University had a record number of 7,000 students, and on

the eve of the war that number had dropped to 5,553. That deliberate policy of limiting the opportunities for higher education was one aspect of an antidemocratic attitude towards education in general. As the future intellectual wealth of the nation, university students were considered extremely dangerous by the dictatorship for they combined knowledge with a sincere love of their country and their people to form an outlook which could never be reconciled to political violence and spiritual stagnation.

The general tendency of decline was only slightly contradicted by students' numbers at the Faculty of Theology, while figures for the faculties of physics and mathematics, and medicine gravitated around the pre-1934 ones. In the stifling intellectual atmosphere of imminent war, deepening social insecurity and increased political persecution, it was only normal that applicants for academic tuition should prefer the neutrality of natural and exact sciences, or the professional prestige promised by medicine, or still, the scholastic seclusion within theological doctrines.

During the monarcho-fascist dictatorship, as before it, tuition was carried out in the traditional framework of seven faculties: History and Philology, Physics and Mathematics, Law, Medicine, Rural Economy and Forestry, Theology, and Veterinary Medicine. A look at the list of disciplines creates the impression that the curricula maintained a favourable combination between the time-honoured fundamental disciplines of a science and the modern tendencies in its development. Even the Department of Economics, which was established at the Faculty of Law in 1938, did not reflect so much an enlightened concern on the part of Bulgarian business as the sound understanding of the Academic Council that the teaching of social sciences should, like the teaching of natural ones, respond rapidly to the newest trends in research and to the objective process of differentiation between branches of study. The first batch of 175 undergraduates at the new department were also the first who were introduced to sociology, a rather fashionable discipline at the time.

Staff members and undergraduates alike were eager to react against the antidemocratic policies of fascist governments. Every attempt to violate academic autonomy and traditions, to distort curricula and raise arbitrary obstacles in the way of normal teaching practices provoked undergraduates' protests. Demands were also raised by undergraduates, which stemmed from broader public concerns, or related to the professional status of former students. In 1936 and '37, the latter problem was also taken up with the Ministry of Public Education by the Academic Council where progressive ideas prevailed among the members.

The academic governing body knew well that in a state of financial insecurity students could not be expected to give themselves up to deep studies. What with the extremely limited amount of grants and prizes, the Academic Council looked for other ways of improving students' welfare by providing subsidized lodgings, organizing students' health insurance and summer holidays at the seaside, etc. That caring attitude was combined with a constant emphasis on intellectual and moral discipline, and with strict criteria of proficiency.

Together with the understandable desire to establish the University as a source of advanced ideas for the improvement of the entire education system, and in addition to its teachers training effort, the governing body felt the necessity to provide for a more efficient academic education, that would also be one "of a wider scope", as the rector, Professor G.P. Genov put it in the summer of 1938¹⁰. The Academic Council demanded the establishment of special training schools of finance, of private and cooperative business; it also appealed for a more considerate government attitude towards the Varna Business Academy and the College of Business in Svishtov, as well as against government plans to close down the Open University.

The breadth of academic vision, so common at Sofia University, was revealed with a particular force in 1938, the year of its golden jubilee which naturally became an occasion of national importance. For the academic community, the eve of the anniversary was a time of giving a serious thought to what had been achieved in the course of five decades, and to what still remained to be done in the future. The statistical record of half a century revealed a lot that was impressive, given the shortage of resources and the vulnerability of public traditions in a newly independent state, as well as the consideration that major cultural developments normally took up longer periods of history. A total of 42,503 students, 31,852 men and 10,651 women, had attended courses at the University between 1888 and 1938; 14,826 out of the total number of students, 11,732 men and 3,094 women, had graduated. During the same period, undergraduates had been taught by 335 lecturers and 307 assistant lecturers.

More important than dry statistics, however, the academic community and the general public firmly believed that the achievements of half a century held promises for the future, which ought to be realized if Sofia University were to become an institution of primary importance for the state and for the nation. The opinion was generally shared that the University's future lay in the fulfilment of its mission as the largest Bulgarian

centre for the advancement of science and education. During the second half of the 1930-ies the public grew steadily convinced that, as the apex of the educational pyramid, the University afforded younger Bulgarian generations a view of the farthest horizon of modern European thought. That, in turn, gave justice to the conviction that the University of Sofia had stirred to activity the intellectual resources of the entire nation, and had become the spiritual symbol of its ethnical, historical, and cultural cohesions¹¹.

The research carried out at the University during the 1934–39 period, provided that public conviction with additional grounds. In particular, physicists G.Nadjakov, P.Penchev, G.Manov, and chemists D.Balarev and Z.Karaouglanov made valuable contributions to international scientific efforts in their respective fields. Chemist Assen Zlatarov ought to be mentioned separately. Died young in 1936, Professor Zlatarov left a lasting memory in academic history, and in the history of Bulgarian culture. In addition to being an outstanding scientist, a charismatic and widely-read lecturer, he was also known for his progressive political and philosophical writing, and public activity. Among Zlatarov's colleagues at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, mathematicians N.Obreshkov and K.Popov were also prominent. Professor of biology M.Popov rose to an international stature with his cell stimulation theory, and his articulate attack on the Nazi theory of the "pure race". Other prominent academic biologists (H.Daskalov, G.Hlebarov, Z.Ganchev, S.Petrov, etc.) also achieved good success in their work during those years.

At the Faculty of Medicine, the symbiosis between the Russian and the West European schools of thought produced an authoritative body of scientists, among them V.Mollov, G.Moskov, N.Krustnikov, S.Kirkovitch. Abundant historical studies were produced by Y.Ivanov, G.Katsarov and P.Nikov. N.Nedelchev, G.Bonchev and I.Batakliiev deserved attention among geographers and geologists. S.Mladenov, S.Romanski, L.Andreychin and V.Georgiev made substantial contributions to the theory of language. Life was also busy among academic philosophers, psychologists and educationalists in whose circle Marxist philosophy met in argument with various idealistic trends. M.Dimitrov was an advocate of materialism, while Western idealism inspired the works of professors D.Mihalchev and S.Kazandjiev.

Obviously, given the political environment at the time, social science, as taught and studied at the University, could not escape fascist influences, and those were rather strongly pronounced in the views of certain academics at the Faculty of Law. On the whole, however, philosophic

idealism, geopolitics, racism and chauvinism could not take deep roots in academic circles during the 1934–39 period, nor did their distinctive methods affect the long established standards of scientific speculation in the field of social studies.

During that period academic science was also often influenced by the immediate political commitments of the teaching staff. Many of its members were drawn into professional politics by the continual government reshuffles where, almost in a row, one university professor replaced another as minister of education. Most of the academics, however, were immune to the bug of office-seeking and continued to reside in complete political neutrality in the privacy of their brown studies. There were also those among them who never ceased to believe in middle-class democracy, and even expressed views whose proper context was far to the left of Bulgarian politics. Professor A. Zlatarov, for instance, had the political courage to publish in 1936 his book "In the Land of the Soviets" ("В страната на Съветите") which attracted an unprecedented public interest with the author's unbiased account of a trip to the Soviet Union. Outspokenness in favour of the USSR was also displayed by Professor D. Mihalchev who was the first Bulgarian minister plenipotentiary to be sent to Moscow when Bulgarian-Soviet diplomatic relations were restored in 1934. Of course, fascist ideas had captured the support of various public circles, and there existed also a section of politically conscious academic opinion which favoured totalitarianism, racism and the whole medley of reactionary views and practices which, in those troubled times, sprouted and thrived in the fetid public atmosphere of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. A. Tsankov, L. Dikov, A. Stanishev, S. Konsulov and L. Vladikin were among the most outspoken representatives of the right wing in academic circles.

Pro-German and pro-Italian sentiments during the 1934–39 period also biased the University's international activities. As the Bulgarian Government established closer contacts with Berlin and Rome, Sofia University intensified its links with German and Italian universities. For their part, the ruling circles in Germany and Italy regarded that as a welcome response to their Balkan policies, and encouraged it in every way. To quote one telling example, among all the European book exchange partners of the Sofia University Library only the Berlin service donated to it regularly an annual sum of 4,000 Reichsmarks. The same political considerations may account for the high relative share of Bulgarian academic publications in German. Out of the total number of 108 works by Bulgarian academics which appeared in foreign languages during the

1937–38 academic year, 60 were in German, 38 in French, and only 10 in other languages. Also, the delegation of German professors was the largest among the foreign guests who attended the celebrations held around the 24th of May, 1939, to mark the 50th anniversary of the University.

On the other hand, a certain rapprochement took place during the period between Sofia University and the Soviet academic community, thanks largely to the restoration of Bulgarian-Soviet diplomatic relations. Contacts were closest in the field of natural science but even those could barely survive against the odds of pro-fascist sentiments in Bulgaria. For instance, out of the total number of 92 honorary doctors of Sofia University, conferred the title before the Second World War, only one was a Russian, biology professor N.I. Vavilov from Leningrad.

The official political line, however, could not shake the Bulgarian public in its conviction, expressed once more during the jubilee celebrations, that Alma Mater indeed was, and ought to remain, the single largest and most important centre for the development of public education and national culture. That considerable measure of public confidence had not been disappointed during the pre-war years, due largely to that consistent trend in academic politics, which had, in the face of constant obstacles, continued to uphold the principles of academic autonomy and modernization.

* * *

In the autumn of 1939 Hitler's armies invaded Poland. The Second World War broke out. The Bulgarian Government, headed by Professor B. Filov, yielded to the threat of German occupation and to fascist pressure within the country, and formally joined Bulgaria to the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) on March 1st, 1941.

In its predominant part, however, the Bulgarian people did not support fascism. Thus, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22nd, 1941, the Bulgarian Workers' Party (BRP) adopted a policy of armed resistance against the monarcho-fascist dictatorship, and was supported in that not only by its own members but also by every true Bulgarian patriot.

The complicated domestic and international situation confronted the University of Sofia with a series of problems. The dictatorship was determined to crush any act of civil disobedience and made no secret of its intentions to curtail the University's freedom by harsh wartime legisla-

tion. From the point of view of academic solidarity it was a paradox, accountable only in terms of one's personal evolution in politics, that the most zealous supporter of that line should be an academic, Professor B. Filov, who was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Education at the beginning of 1940.

Every academic initiative still had to push its way through the labyrinth of equivocal legal provisions, where its progress was often checked by arbitrary and politically motivated government interference. Thus, most of the Academic Council's suggestions on the new Public Education Bill were lost before they reached Parliament. In the main, they dwelt on the establishment of new departments and a faculty of technology, on higher budgets and the improved management of academic funds, on greater academic freedom concerning the professional activities of the teaching staff, on a more accurate system of examination and selection of candidates.

Most of these suggestions were rejected through the interference of Prime Minister and Minister of Education Filov who, as soon as he took office at the beginning of 1940, got down to work on the Bill in his ambition to make it provide for the organization of Bulgarian youth (at schools and elsewhere in society) as the Nazis had done in Germany. Obviously, the suggestions, which the Academic Council had put forward, were in disagreement with the Minister's intentions.

Work on the University's building projects was either slowed down or cancelled altogether. Again, the Government's pretext was shortage of money, this time in view of the war effort.

A year later, another round of conflict started between the University and the Ministry of Education. The academic governing body would not put up with anti-Semitism, and when the Law on the Protection of the Nation appeared, it raised a strong protest against those articles which closely affected undergraduates and staff members of Jewish origin.

The most serious clash, however, came in March, 1941, when Parliament voted a bill of amendments to the Civil Service Act. The new provisions directly attacked the University's autonomy by authorizing the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Education to dismiss members of the academic teaching staff, or to take any other disciplinary action against them.

The academic community was up in arms against the new bill. As people of public insight, the academics realized that the moment of truth had come for Sofia University, when it had to take the tragic path which the war had marked out for the entire nation, when its members ought

to unite in order to protect that national house of humane ideas and learning from the political hooliganism of the dictatorship. Every dean's council at the University supported the Academic Council's unanimous decision to put up a staunch opposition against the bill of amendments. As became his great intellectual and moral probity, the rector, professor archpriest S. Tsankov, PhD, did not allow himself to be intimidated by government ministers and other high-ranking politicians, and proclaimed the principles of academic autonomy in every public quarter.

Filov was intransigent and possessed by the ambition to show his academic colleagues that, as a politician, he could afford to forget about the carrot, and rule by the stick alone. Said the Prime Minister: "All group interests, even scientific ones, must give way."¹² King Boris III responded evasively, which was his typical manner: "We live in troubled times. Caution is needed, lest we err on the wrong side..."¹³ As for Parliament, it was anxious to toe the Government's line, and rubber-stamped the Bill with a single minor rider.

The academic circles made no attempt to hide their disappointment with the Government and the monarch. Public life was enveloped in an atmosphere of suspicion, a strong censorship was in force, yet the academics were bold enough to seize any opportunity of expressing their discontent. In a speech on Dec. 8th, University Day, 1941, in the presence of the royal family and the cabinet, Professor T. Tsankov, then rector, strongly attacked the Government for having, without any fair grounds, infringed upon the University's autonomy.

Shortly after that, the Government retaliated by suspending a considerable portion of the academic fund for research, which, in spite of the regular annual protests on the part of the Academic Council, it did not release until the autumn of 1944. The idea of establishing a faculty of technology at the University, which had been around since 1939, was shelved altogether. By way of sanction again, some other academic funds were cut down temporarily, which were mainly used to finance teaching and research activities.

Against all those odds, however, the Academic Council persisted in its efforts to raise the standards of Sofia University with the clear understanding that the task could not be achieved outside the establishment of new teaching and research units.

In the spring of 1940, the outcome of a hard debate with the Ministry was marked by the opening of a new department of economics at the Law Faculty, and a department of radiology, physiotherapy and balneology at the Faculty of Medicine. Two years later, 70 future dentists and 50

future pharmacists took up studies at the respective newly opened departments. The Institute of Finance and the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology were added to the Law Faculty under the influence of German models. As political relations with Japan entered a more active phase, Japanese language was introduced at the University as an optional subject; the close links between Bulgaria and Italy influenced the decision to split the Department of Romance Languages into separate departments of Italian and French. During the 1943–44 academic year a branch of the University was opened in the town of Skopije with a single faculty of history and philology where three degree courses (Slavonic languages, history and geography) were run by a total of eight departments. The same year saw a special degree course in journalism start at the Faculty of Law.

Tuition underwent some improvements as well. The University still kept its autonomy of decision on teaching procedures. A series of new regulations sought to establish better proportions between term syllabuses and examinations, between criteria of proficiency and the organization of studies. Curricula were updated in keeping with the principle that academic disciplines should reflect the latest achievements in the respective fields of research.

Students, the second major factor in the academic equation, developed rather rapidly in terms of quantity. The wartime record was reached during the 1942–43 academic year with a total of 9,308, 6,816 men and 2,492 women. That significant rise in students' numbers was due to the fact that 25 per cent of the undergraduates in the first year came from Macedonia, the Aegean region of Thrace, Dobroudja, and Bulgarian territories off the Western border which had become parts of the country in 1941. Also, the unstable international situation forced many Bulgarians to break off their studies abroad and resume them at the University of Sofia.

Brought on by the war, that influx of new students was somewhat unwarranted, and compelled the academic governing body to look for ways of regulating it in terms of quality. To qualify for the entrance examinations at the departments of philology, candidates were now required to have done the respective language at secondary school. A third quantity – the mark in a specified secondary school subject – was added to the examination result and the overall school-leaving mark to obtain the mean value which was used to grade applicants.

During the same period the governing body took pains to revive the activities of undergraduate academic societies. Again those met to dis-

cuss works written by some of the members, and largely preserved their traditional academic image of political neutrality.

The Academic Council also continued to plead with the Ministry on behalf of students of low-income families. Thanks to its efforts, some education fees were abolished; the Low Income Students Relief Fund was set up, and such students were registered in order to receive allowances and some clothes from the University. The Sofia Council started the building of a student hostel but that went slowly, again because of financial difficulties.

Contrary to what might be expected in view of the rising number of undergraduates, the growth of the teaching staff remained low and inadequate to the needs. One of the reasons why young graduates did not choose a teaching career at the University was that academic employees were rather low paid; also given the fact that undergraduates who showed some promise for successful scholarly pursuits came usually from low-income families and ran into debts to pay their way through university, once they had graduated they would no longer contemplate an academic career but sought a more profitable one. The Academic Council recognized pecuniary considerations as unavoidable and, having studied the relevant Soviet and American experience, suggested the introduction of three to four year fellowships for graduates who displayed an early talent for teaching and research. Due to bureaucratic sluggishness, or to its own financial considerations, until the autumn of 1944 the Ministry failed to respond to that sign of concern for the quality of academic tuition. That was probably one of the main reasons why a slight yet real tendency of aging was present in the development of the academic teaching staff during the war.

Times became even harder for the University during the 1943–44 period when, because of bombing raids on Sofia, the faculties had to be evacuated to the countryside. Tuition was disrupted; term and entrance examinations became a problem to organize. Still, the governing body largely managed to keep the situation in hand, and saw to it that teachers and students continued to meet on more or less proper academic terms. In the autumn of 1944, Alma Mater welcomed 2,000 first-year students, hopeful of the radical political changes in the wake of the 9th of September socialist revolution, hopeful about the future of university education in Bulgaria.

In the sphere of research activities, too, the Academic Council tried not to be deterred by the wartime crisis. The University's scientific output continued to grow along its natural course of development, aided by the

time-honoured tradition of assigning equal importance to teaching and research. The "University Library" series, in which 20 volumes appeared annually, and the 12 faculty yearbooks could no longer cope with the steady flow of manuscripts and the authors had to approach non-academic publications. One of the highlights of that period was the massive "Sofia St. Kliment of Ohrid University Almanac", a prestigious publication which came out in 1939 to mark the University's jubilee.

What academic writing was devoted during the war period to the domain of social studies continued to uphold progressive theoretical premises in defiance of the official government line. Naturally, exceptions to that rule occurred, given the atmosphere of wartime hysteria which the fascist dictatorship encouraged; on the whole, however, it would be true to say that the academics did not betray their democratic and humanitarian views.

On the other hand, experimental studies in the domain of natural sciences were rather hard hit by the shortage of funds for investment in vital laboratory equipment. Instead, the leading scientists at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics (G.Nadjakov, D.Balarev, Z.Karaouglanov, G.Manev, N.Obreshkov, K.Popov and L.Chakalov) had to devote their efforts to abstract theory. In 1942, biology associate professor D.Kostov, who had done research at American and Soviet establishments, won the prestigious Bernardini Award for his work on cell genetics, cross-breeding and plant immunology. Professor of biology M.Popov persisted in his anti-racist anthropological studies.

Other branches of academic research also moved ahead during the period due to the valuable contributions of the following scientists: in human medicine – D.Stamatov and S.Bullinov; in veterinary medicine – T.Radev, P.Hadjidimitrov and S.Ivanov; in jurisprudence – G.P.Genov and P.Stainov; in political economy and geography – V.Stoyanov, Y.Mollov, Y.Ivanchev and S.Bonchev; in history and philology – P.Moutafchiev, P.Bitsilli, M.Arnaoudov, G.Katsarov, S.Mladenov, H.Gandev, I.Douitchev, G.Gullubov, D.Detchev, V.Beshevliev and P.Poprouzhenko; in didactics – P.Tsonev; in psychology – S.Kazandjiev.

The University's international relations were deeply affected by the war. After the spring of 1941, contacts remained close only with the Axis Powers and their allies: Slovakia, Hungary and Independent Croatia. Before that, links had been rather active with the University of Belgrade, due to the signing in 1937 of the Bulgarian-Yugoslav "eternal friendship" treaty. D.Kostov, who has been mentioned above, made use of his personal contacts with Soviet biologists in order to try and revive

the scientific exchange between the University and academics in Moscow and Leningrad. All those efforts were put an end to when Bulgaria joined the Axis in early 1941.

On the eve of the far-reaching political events which took place in the early autumn of 1944, its international reputation was not the only problem of Sofia University; its national credibility as a teaching institution had been placed under a serious threat since the beginning of the year and needed a major reorganization effort to be restored; in spite of a rather extensive building programme, further investment in academic facilities had been long overdue. Thus, it was with great hopes about the future of academic science and education that teachers and students at Sofia University greeted the successful anti-fascist uprising of Sept. 9th, 1944.

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The First World War had failed to bring about the reunification of Bulgarian lands. On the contrary, as a result of its entire war effort between 1912 and 1918 Bulgaria lost some new territories to neighbouring Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania. However, ethnic Bulgarians who inhabited Dobroudja, the Edirne region of Thrace, and Macedonia would not put up with foreign rule and continued to fight for their national identity. In that struggle, Sofia University again became a centre of ethnic communion between young Bulgarians born on both sides of the national border. In particular, the "Vardar" undergraduate society played an important role in that process.

The society was founded in 1920 to promote cultural and political awareness of undergraduates who came from the Vardar and the Aegean region of Macedonia, and to use peaceful means for the reunification of Bulgarian territories. Its members worked to stir up public interest at home and abroad in support of the national-liberation movement in the said territories. During the 1920-ies and 30-ies the society organized a number of "propaganda weeks" and "remembrance days, in memory of young Macedonian freedom fighters". It published "Ilinden", a periodical collection of writings which vindicated the past and the present of the national-liberation movement. It also worked in close collaboration with the Bulgarian Students Union to draw the attention of the European public to the Bulgarian national question.

During the mid twenties, women members of the "Vardar" undergraduate society laid the foundations of the "Cooperative Society of

Young Macedonian Women". The two organizations engaged in active contacts with students' unions in Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Croatia.

"Vardar" survived until 1934, when it was banned by the new fascist regime. Its ideas were taken up by the "Shar" students' corporation which was founded in 1935, and soon established links with the union of Macedonian students. A number of academics, like L.Miletic, A.Balabanov, I.Georgov and S.Mladenov, also made efforts in support of Bulgarians living in the Vardar and the Aegean regions of Macedonia. During the first half of the 1930-ies they took the initiative of setting up the Institute of Macedonian Studies which specialized in the language, history and ethnology of Bulgarians in Macedonia.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of Bulgarian academics, other similar institutes were set up between the world wars: the Institute of Dobroudja Studies, the Institute of West-Bulgarian Studies, the Institute of Thracian Studies; all of them ran their periodical publications. The academic teaching staff also supported materially and morally the charitable organizations set up by Macedonian refugees in Bulgaria.

In terms of domestic politics, the academic community traditionally supported democratic principles and participated actively in the anti-fascist movement during the 1918–1944 period. Following the instructions of the Bulgarian Young Communist League (BYCL), young social democrats at the University reorganized themselves in the "V.I.Lenin" Students' communist group in 1919. The group was also organizationally linked with the Young Communist International (YCI).

During the same time, communist activities at the University were counterbalanced by the newly founded "Jean Jaurès" group of young socialists. The latter was a branch of the Young Socialist League in Bulgaria, and also worked in collaboration with the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party – United, and with the Young Socialist International.

In 1923, many undergraduates took part in the September Anti-Fascist Uprising, and fell among its victims.

In 1929, the undergraduates at the Faculty of History and Philology went on a strike, and were soon joined by their colleagues at other faculties, to protest against the Government's authoritarian attitude towards the University. In the course of that strike the Bulgarian Popular Students Union (BPSU) was born, which supported the communists' fight against fascism and contributed to the process which resulted in the 1944 socialist revolution.

In 1931, supported by their progressive colleagues, the BPSU members rose in opposition to the return of the former Prime Minister, "bloodstained professor" A. Tsankov to his academic career at the Faculty of Law. Tsankov had staged the fascist coup of June 9th, 1923, and had later crushed the September Uprising. The students' protest against his return to the "humanities" actually had wider political implications since his name had become a byword for fascism.

The years 1933 and 1934 saw new strikes at the University. Altogether, during the fascist dictatorship the BPSU members worked hard to attract all progressive undergraduates to their organization as active supporters of Marxist and Leninist ideology. On the eve of the Second World War, the students formed the backbone of the youth peace movement in Bulgaria. In their strikes of the 1937-40 period they were supported by the progressive public opinion, and in particular, when the students protested against the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. A year later, the students' indignation was stirred up by the Government's refusal to sign a treaty of non-aggression and cooperation with the Soviet Union, as the Soviet side had proposed. During the same year, the authorities were again disturbed by a big strike at the Faculty of Law.

When the German army invaded the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, the Bulgarian Communist Party started a guerilla war against the fascist dictatorship, in which scores of undergraduates and former students at Sofia University took part. Among those who died a heroic death in that battle, to mention but a few, were: A. Antonov-Malchika, L. Dimitrova, V. Vodenicharski, S. Edrev, A. Manchev, V. Peeva, T. Spassov, M. Boev, E. Shekerdjiski, G. Kalchev. "Always with the people!" was their slogan, and their self-sacrifice for the people wrote one of the loftiest chapters in the history of its struggle for freedom and democracy.

Chapter 4

THE SOFIA UNIVERSITY DURING THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO SOCIALISM (1944–1958)

Reorganization of the faculties: After the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria in 1944, the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia embarked upon a qualitatively new stage of its development. That stage was associated with the deep revolutionary transformations taking place at that time in all spheres of life in the country. Successfully coping with the hardships of the postwar period, the Bulgarian people launched the implementation of the general policy worked out by the Fifth Congress of the BCP (1948) of building the socialist social system.

The accomplishment of the stupendous historic task became possible thanks to the set of favourable socio-economic and political conditions obtaining in the country. As a result of the persevering and purposeful work of the honest patriots, and under the leadership of the BCP, the economy ruined during the years of the Second World War¹ was successfully rebuilt. At the end of the 1940s, the country's economy attained its prewar level marking a lasting trend of increase of the industrial output turned out by the industrial enterprises newly built during the first two-year plan².

The international positions of the state were also stabilized. The peace treaty signed and the system of mutual assistance between the people's democracies with the USSR at the helm that was established, enabled the Bulgarian people to build a socialist society without external interference and imperialist intervention.

By 1948, a formerly unprecedented political unity of the people, the army and the progressive intelligentsia had been achieved within the ranks of the Fatherland Front. The forces of fascism and bourgeois reaction were completely eliminated from the sphere of administration as well as from the scientific sphere. In this way the overall situation advancing the extensive upbuilding of the economic, political and cultural outlines of the socialist social system took shape³.

As the main subjective factor of development, the BCP correctly assessed that socialist construction was practically impossible unless the Party policy relied on the achievements of progressive science. That is why, it has been unambiguously emphasized in all documents related to the problems of science and education and released since 1944, that the

existence of a powerful scientific sphere in the country should be regarded as a factor of crucial importance for the construction of socialism in Bulgaria⁴.

This formulation of the BCP essentially reflects the qualitatively new place and unprecedented assignments that Bulgarian science and higher education in particular received as a public commission in the conditions of socialist construction. Hence the pressing need for an optimum organizational and administrative structure within the system of the establishments of higher learning whereby science and higher education would function in conformity with society's new requirements. This led to the first radical restructuring of the oldest establishment of higher education, the Kliment of Ohrid University in Sofia, which largely determined the image of higher education in Bulgaria throughout the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. In the course of that reform, faculties were separated which laid the foundations of some of the most representative higher educational establishments and made the University itself a socialist establishment of higher learning.

The objective historical reasons which necessitated the thoroughgoing reform in the University were supplemented by a number of internal problems and contradictions in the structure of Bulgaria's oldest higher educational establishment which had piled up during the period of capitalism, and which also called imperatively for prompt changes. Their continuance in future threatened its development as a leading institution of science and higher education. For instance, the building up of the country's socialist economy called for the development of economics at higher rates. By that time, the Economics Faculty of the Sofia University focussed alone the economics cadres and determined the status of that science. This circumstance was not conducive to the unfolding of the research work needed to provide timely answers to all those complicated theoretical problems that socialist economic practice was daily bringing to the fore. The same held good regarding the state and possibilities of medicine and the agricultural science. The respective university faculties, which existed until 1948, did not promise bright prospects to public health and socialist agriculture. In a word, the upbuilding of a powerful and modern socialist economy demanded a faster development of the individual branches of the sciences servicing it – a requirement which was unattainable within the framework of the faculties.

Secondly, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, there was a pressing need in Bulgaria for university graduates in all spheres of education and cultural and political life. One of the most im-

portant tasks set to the University of Sofia was associated with the carrying out of the socialist cultural revolution. It called for the formation of a powerful army of university graduates in the humanities which were to take in their hands the guidance of the cultural and the social life of the nation. That is why in the late 1940s, the number of university students in Bulgaria rapidly increased. In the 1949–1950 academic year, more than 30,000 young people had enrolled in the University of Sofia. That figure means that the number of students had risen more than five times over compared with the prewar period⁵. Given the state of its facilities at that time, the University found it impossible to do in good faith the bidding of society due to the unsurmountable obstacles interfering with the normal process of instruction⁶. A way out of the overcrowding of the university building and an outcome of this kind of difficulties pestering the oldest establishment of higher learning in the country was the separation of some faculties and their reorganization into independent higher institutes.

A very important reason for the restructuring of the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the inherited overburdening of its old structural units. A typical example in this respect was the state of what were then the History and Philology and the Mathematics and Natural Sciences faculties. The former incorporated all language departments plus history, philosophy and pedagogics. By 1948, that faculty had 28 departments with over 200 lecturers. Such faculty structures evince internal lack of homogeneity, ensuing from the great differences between the individual fields of interest in the humanities. The faculty councils of the History and Philology and the Mathematics and Natural Sciences faculties increasingly found themselves 'incompetent' in the discussion of special research and cadre matters. In order that homogeneous university structures might be set up which would thoroughly and in detail analyze each fact that had newly emerged in the sphere of science and higher education, the restructuring and decentralization of the enormous old faculties of the bourgeois university was highly necessary.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the restructuring of the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia was also imperative because of some elements which were obviously absurd but continued in its structure at that time. By 1950, for instance, the Theological Faculty was still part of that Alma Mater. The incompatibility of theology and science called for the elimination of these elements, too, of the old type of higher educational establishment set up in Bulgaria in the period of capitalism.

Moreover, it should be added that rapid socialist construction in Bulgaria called for the establishment of a number of entirely new specialities

within the sphere of higher education. Their administrative and scientific integration within the framework of the University added further complications to the already extremely complex and hardly manageable structure of the University, if it remained the way it was. So the demands of social practice and the needs of university science and higher education in Bulgaria in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism called for the establishment of a new socialist structure of the Kliment of Ohrid University in Sofia. The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was the theoretician of the university reform which began after 1944 and ended in 1951. The Committee for Science, Art and Culture performed the role of direct leader of the restructuring, while the reform was practically accomplished by the Academic Council of the University, headed by the rectorate. In 1948, Professor Georgi Nadjakov, PhD, was elected Rector of the University and two years later, Professors Vladimir Georgiev, Daki Yordanov, Lyubomir Chakalov and Associate Professor Assen Kisselinchev became deputy rectors⁷. The Party and Young Communist League organizations set up after the victory of the socialist revolution, played an irreplaceable role in shaping the socialist character of the Kliment of Ohrid University in Sofia.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the restructuring of the Kliment of Ohrid University in Sofia proceeded in two stages. The first stage was associated with the separation of those administrative units within which the branches of the agricultural sciences developed chiefly. In 1948, four faculties were separated from the University: those of Agronomy, Stock Breeding, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. They were united into one and made up the Academy of Agricultural Sciences⁸. In this way university education in Bulgaria outgrew its 'comprehensive' character, which was typical of the majority of West European establishments of Higher learning in the period of capitalism, following the model of which the Sofia University had also been established⁹. The Bulgarian state university began to take on the model of the socialist universities. The separation of the agricultural sciences affected favourably the training process, did not give rise to any special discussions among the body of lecturers and contributed to the greater homogeneity of the University.

The second stage of the reform was carried out in 1950–1951. Apart from the separation of a few other faculties and their transformation into independent higher educational establishments, it was also associated with a substantial internal reorganization of the research and training units which remained within the framework of the University. That is why the second part of the university reform was considerably longer and led to much more disputes and discussions regarding the

character, goals and possibilities of university faculties under socialism.

The second stage of the reorganization actually began on July 8, 1950. The Academic Council held a special session. The task was set in a report of the Rector to the members of the Academic Council to consider how the History and Philology, and the Mathematics and Natural Sciences faculties could be reorganized to do away with their excessively large fields of interest and lack of homogeneity. After a thorough analysis of the problem, the governing body of the University decided that making them work compact was necessary for objective reasons. It was suggested that Geography be separated from the History and Philology Faculty, while Geology and Biology be separated from the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Faculty. These three departments were to form a new unit first called Geology, Geography and Biology Faculty. The fields of learning that remained in the History and Philology Faculty were to be assigned to another two independent faculties – a faculty of languages and literature and a faculty of philosophy, education and history. It was decided that the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences remain unchanged at that stage¹⁰.

The suggestion of the Academic Council was submitted for approval by the Committee for Science, Art and Culture. From there it was forwarded to the Council of Ministers. On October 3, 1950, letter No 4-245 was received from the Government. On October 4, 1950, the Academic Council reassembled to discuss the letter. The University Rector, Professor Georgi Nadjakov reported that the Council of Ministers had approved of the stand of the governing body of the University related to its newly-proposed structure.

In the meantime, the Faculty of Theology was also separated at the beginning of the academic year 1950/1951. Its lecturers were transferred to the Theological Academy. Part of the students of that faculty were enrolled to continue their training in history¹¹.

In the spring of 1951, the restructuring continued by the separation of pharmacology from the Sofia University. Until then, it had been part of the structure of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. In a letter addressed to the Academic Council, the Ministry of Public Health proved the expediency of pharmacology being studied at the Medical Academy that had just been set up in Sofia. With government approval, on April 17, 1951, the Academic Council voted a pertinent decision¹².

In May, 1951, two other problems related to the formation of the new character of the Sofia University were on the agenda: the final specifica-

tion of the internal structure of the language and literature departments and whether the Economics Faculty was to remain within the University. These problems were the subject of serious internal University discussions, whose culmination were the Academic Council meetings on May 28 and June 5, 1951. During the first one the character of philology was in the focus of attention. The dean of the faculty, Professor Georgi Tsanev, delivered a detailed report. He defended with sound arguments the stand of the Faculty Council, according to which, at that stage, the Philology Faculty was not to be further fragmented into new, smaller and therefore weaker faculties. The University leadership supported the stand of the Faculty Council. In this situation, the Academic Council unanimously supported the view of the Philology Faculty whereby the latter was not to be further disintegrated. A hasty and ungrounded tendency, born in the course of the big university reform was countered, as that further disintegration in the early 1950s would have complicated the research and cadre development of language and literature studies in Bulgaria. The teaching staff of the University showed soberness in its assessments and did not succumb to futile emotions and administrative rashness, which would have swarmed up a multitude of small and therefore weak and unpromising research and training units at too early a date in that most prestigious higher educational establishment in the country.

The second part of the meeting of the Academic Council, held on June 20, 1951, was devoted to the differentiation of the Economics Faculty as an independent Institute of Economics.

The dean of the Economics Faculty proposed a rational solution to the Academic Council of the University, viz. that the rector and his deputies agree to the establishment of an independent Higher Institute of Economics while at the same time, the economics speciality be preserved at the Kliment of Ohrid University as well. The Academic Council agreed to assist in the establishment of a separate Higher Institute of Economics, provided that a full-fledged Economics Faculty¹³ remained part of the Sofia University. In this way the final result of that big university discussion which took place in 1950–1951 was summed up. In practice, however, the problem was resolved in quite another manner, later on. In January 1952, higher ranking officials set apart the Economics Faculty and transformed it into the independent Karl Marx Higher Institute of Economics. At the same time, the opportunity of studying economics at the Sofia University, too, was eliminated. No economics faculty remained within its structure. This decision adversely affected the development of economics in Bulgaria. A Department of Political Economy has

survived in the Sofia University only, but its functions are general educational and ideological.

In this way, the first restructuring of the Sofia University in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism was completed. Five basic faculties became differentiated in the course of that restructuring. They received the following names: 1) Philosophy and History, 2) Philology, 3) Physics and Mathematics, 4) Biology, Geology and Geography, and 5) Law. In administrative documents they were arranged in that same succession in the discussion of some matters and reports on decisions on the part of the faculty councils. The further structural changes carried out at the Sofia University in the 1950s were chiefly aimed at rounding off these scientific units.

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Improvement of the process of university training. The prestige of any university in the world is determined above all by the state of the training process, by the standards of training acquired by the graduates and their capacity to resolve creatively the complicated problems of social practice. That is why, one of the foremost goals of the academic authorities of the Kliment of Ohrid Sofia University in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in Bulgaria was to build the best possible structure of training. The overall deepening of the revolutionary transformations since the historic decisions of the Fifth Party Congress, set new tasks to university policies as well. The main objective of university education in the late 1940s boiled down to its overall restructuring in terms of methodology and organizational practice on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. That process took place in a complicated situation. It held elements objectively conducive to the restructuring. For instance, the defeat of bourgeois opposition in 1947 drastically eased tensions in the country, and consequently in the lecture halls of the Alma Mater where greater calm ensuring normal university training set in. By 1948, all reactionary or pro-fascist professors and lecturers whose world outlooks and former socio-political practice were at variance with the policy adopted by the BCP of the formation of the socialist society and of the new personality in Bulgaria, were dismissed. Lectures and seminars were entrusted to democratically minded scientists of the pre-revolutionary generation, as well as to newly appointed lecturers and assistant professors, armed with a Marxist-Leninist world outlook. As a result, the university students did not have to wage a political struggle against any reac-

tionary acts of a bourgeois intelligentsia at the University. They were better able to focus their attention on the problems related to their growth as good specialists with higher education.

The fact that the academic body already had quite a significant experience in the practical reorganization of higher education, especially after 1948, was one of the circumstances contributing to the restructuring of the training process at the Sofia University along socialist lines. That experience enabled the Academic Council and the faculty councils to grasp more easily the newly emerging problems with a view to their prompt tackling. Two achievements scored by the Rectorate until 1948, which have been constantly improved since, played a primary role. The first one was associated with the establishment and functioning of a streamlined internal system of guidance and control of the methodological reorganization of the training process. Basically, it was made up of the following elements: usually the lecturers of the old generation and the newly appointed young assistant professors first underwent a six-month course of training to study Marxist-Leninist philosophy at the school organized by the CC of the BCP in Bānkya. Afterwards the efforts aimed at shaping the new character of the teaching process passed through the implementation of the syllabus of mandatory attendance and discussion of lectures and seminars, the collective elucidation of key theoretical problems with a view to their correct interpretation in the training process. Systematic criticism was also levelled at deliberate falsifications, acts of idealism in research and lecturing committed by the bourgeois scholars. All these activities were gaining momentum up until the mid '50s yielding positive results.

The second major achievement in university practice up until 1955, which greatly facilitated the reorganization of the training process was associated with the rechannelling of instruction along planned lines. A tradition was established according to which at the beginning of each academic year the Rectorate worked out a calendar plan of the training process and its supervision. It was specified in two separate plans for the two terms with an orientation towards the individual problems to be tackled by each of the existing faculties. Supervision of the implementation was achieved through their breakdown into three-month and monthly schedules of events. The Academic Council and the dean's offices took care that the tasks set be accomplished in time and raised the problems pending solution. By the mid '50s, an enormous amount of work was accomplished in all faculties related to the writing and publication of new textbooks and study aids for the students, entirely based on the Marxist-

Leninist scientific methodology; the first socialist education syllabuses were worked out and introduced for all subjects studied at the University; a system of linking up University education in Bulgaria with the actual problems that had arisen in the practice of socialist construction in the country was set up; a precise system of selection of prospective students introduced along with proper control of the active participation of the trainees in the study process. Taken as a whole, these achievements gave the outlines of a situation which had tangibly changed and objectively facilitated the socialist reorganization of the study process, enabling it to embark upon its extended phase of realization.

At the same time, however, it should be emphasized that in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism 'the cultural revolution' at the University of Sofia was paralleled by efforts to cope with objective difficulties which in practice hampered the normal development of education work. These were the result both of the setbacks inherited from the past, which took a long time to surmount, and of some precipitous or inevitable measures carried through between 1944 and 1948.

For instance, in the early 1950s, the budget of the University of Sofia was still extremely limited. The enormous demands of the new socialist construction launched in Bulgaria at that time did not permit the state to set apart the means needed for the rapid development of university education. That is why the departments did not have auxiliary staff. Even the requisite number of typewriters was lacking. Therefore, along with their direct lecturing, the professors had to do a multitude of activities which were not their proper work and were associated with the typing of all kinds of documents, syllabuses, progress reports, etc. That was in the way of the normal fulfilment of their obligations as scientists and lecturers.

The material facilities of the University were extremely limited. Aware of the tangibly greater needs of specialists with higher education, the people's government started the construction of the northern and southern wings of the University. Later on, the compound of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics in Anton Ivanov Blvd. was also reconstructed. Until 1952, however, all these buildings were still practically unusable and the University could not profit from their auditoriums and facilitate the training processes. At the same time, the drastically greater needs of the new socialist economy and culture entailed, in the course of the socialist revolution in the country, a five-time increase of the number of newly enrolled university students. Therefore, in the late 1940s and early 1950s the University was literally overcrowded and unable to re-

ceive and train its students properly. There was a time when the University of Sofia trained over 30,000 future university graduates. From that moment almost to the very end of the 1950s the University authorities worked hard to surmount the difficulties related to the material facilities and affecting the study process.

The incomplete staff of lecturers was yet another impediment to the study process. At the beginning, there were no professors and associate professors in some of the subjects taught at the University. That is why sometimes one professor had to read two or more courses of lectures. Sometimes these fields of study differed one from the other both in subject matter and in chronology. That was how conditions were created for squandering of efforts, and in certain cases for the superficial interpretation of fundamental scientific postulates, without any possibility whatever for a thorough analysis and a presentation of the latest achievements of the respective sciences.

It should be added along these lines, too, that some of the newly appointed lecturers, though having a good Marxist-Leninist theoretical grounding, were not yet leading specialists and good scientists in the concrete scientific fields. When the fact is taken into account, also, that the old generation of university lecturers had too many problems to solve regarding their methodological adaptation and regarding the alignment of positive scientific knowledge to Marxist-Leninist methodology, it would become clear that the state of the study process during that period depended too much also on 'the state of transition' that the academic staff of the University was going through.

The picture of the objective difficulties concomittant with the formation of the new socialist character of the training process at the Sofia University will, however, be incomplete, if no mention is made of the fact that the restructuring of the university took place in a situation when the student youth had likewise quite a few specific 'defects'. As a result of the policy pursued by the people's government, in the period of transition the overwhelming majority of students at Sofia University were already sons and daughters of the working people. But as that generation had had limited opportunities of acquiring good training under capitalism and fascism, part of the students did not have proper grounding, did not speak, as a rule, foreign languages, with the exception of Russian, etc. In a word, the specific milieu of the trainees – the student collective, also had a number of elements of a 'transitional' type of a socialist body of students. The Komsomol had to wage a serious struggle for the imposition of academic standards and the eradication of the digressions from

the norm manifest as the offspring of an outdated morality and concrete historical situations. This, however, also took a lot of time and effort, and moreover, of the best students, thus hampering their normal participation in the process of training.

The early 1950s coincided with the personality cult period in the development of socialist Bulgaria. At that time high-handed administration and gross interference of 'high ranking institutions, often substituted the calm and comprehensive analysis of the problems arising in the education process. Therefore, the obstacles thus outlined, when taken as a whole, were indeed a serious stumbling block. The socialist restructuring of the training process at the Sofia University was carried out in the course of the resolution of all these problems.

* * *

The qualitative leap in the improvement of training work at the University during the transition from capitalism to socialism was noted in the late 1950s. The main circumstances making that leap possible, can be classified in the following succession. The April 1956 Plenum of the CC of the BCP whose decisions ushered in the process of overcoming of the patterns and dogmatism in thinking and action of the personality cult period at all levels of the Party and the state¹⁴. At the Sofia University the breaking of the sectarian fetters resulted in a high tide of creative impulses which gave rise to a number of new undertakings. And although the daring ideas which had proved their effectiveness in practice were not very many until 1958, as the concept of the overall improvement of socialist higher education in Bulgaria took about a decade to crystallize before it materialized in the 1960s, the striving after innovatory thinking yielded its earliest fruits.

In the second place, during the ten years that had passed since the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria, the task of training higher education cadres needed by the national economy and the cultural sphere had by and large been accomplished. In terms of quantity, the problem of university graduates was losing that acuteness characteristic of the late 1940s and early 1950s. There were opportunities of slowing down the rate and aiming at quality indicators in the study process at the University. The view that the emphasis should be laid mainly on the qualitative aspect of training began to take the upper hand.

The accumulation of national experience in the sphere of higher education in the country also played an essential role in the enhancement of

the trend of renewal. The detailed review of the training process by the departments of the University faculties up to the mid-'50s, though fettered by the dogmatism of its time, offered a number of examples of profound reasoning and search for new solutions. Added to all this should be the fact that in the late 1950s the worldwide revolution in science and technology imperatively put its new requirements to university education in Bulgaria, too. The victory of the socialist social system and the qualitatively new relations that Bulgaria was building with the other members of the socialist community required new approaches to the management, guidance and functioning of the training process at the University. All this provided the groundwork for the subsequent deep-going changes in the country's socialist higher education.

In the context of the overall training process, several significant facts deserve special attention. In the first place, between 1956 and 1959 the concept of the role and place of the compulsory ideological subjects in the structure of higher education became finally clarified. An end was put to the practice of constantly increasing the number of lectures on these subjects in the syllabuses of the faculties. A tendency existed until the mid-'50s which led to an 'oversaturation' of the students with theoretical ideological information, while the need for more hours in the special subjects was overlooked. The consequences typical of all excesses began to become apparent.

The practice of the departments of the ideological subjects playing the first fiddle in the ideological and methodological reorganization of the staff and the students the way they did in the years of the personality cult, was gradually abandoned.

Since 1956, the correct understanding that the ideological education and world outlook of the specialists with higher education in Bulgaria neither begins nor ends with the five years spent at the university has become part and parcel of university practice. The university students who had grown up in the socialist society and graduated from a Bulgarian socialist secondary school came to the University with much greater ideological and political knowledge. That is why the aim of instruction in the ideological disciplines in the Alma Mater was not the presentation of the ABC truths of Marxism-Leninism, but the greater opportunities offered to the future university graduates to learn how to think creatively, from Marxist-Leninist methodological positions in the field of the special science to which they had devoted their efforts. In this sense the role of the university lecturer has been to present originally elaborated study courses, which would stir the students to non-standard theoretical think-

ing. In order to be able to perform this task, the social scientists at the University had to be released from their overburdening, as it impeded their personal development and self-improvement.

In 1956, the staff of the Sofia University took an active part in the discussion of the new bill on higher education in Bulgaria. That legislative act focussed the experience accumulated in the sphere of higher education during the transition from capitalism to socialism. In the finalization of its text, the academic staff of the University made some of the most interesting new proposals. They are another proof of the unfettered thinking gaining momentum along the lines of the qualitative improvement of the training process in the socialist higher educational establishments, not only as regards its formal organizational aspect, but in its relationship with all its components, from planning and supervision of training to the improvement of the facilities used in the training of university students.

For instance, the academic staff of the University insisted that Art. 1 of the bill be revised in a sense that the training of specialists with higher education was to be 'directly related to the needs of socialist practice', an idea advocating the updating of the set list of cadres that had taken shape in the transition period, so that a new list might be adopted ensuing from the needs of the socialist society. As an amendment to Art. 16, the Academic Council of the University proposed that 'only (a lecturer) who has published scientific works' shall be made an associate professor. In this way the practice of the transition period had to be done away with, according to which some people received scientific degrees and titles, mostly on account of their socio-political activities. At the same time, they made no serious efforts to contribute to science – the primary condition for a high quality training process. In a word, in the late 1950s, the correct understanding that socially useful work and lecturing had to be mutually complementary but not interchangeable began to get the upper hand.

For the first time, the suggestion coming from the University regarding Art. 27 insisted that sanctions be introduced not only against university students 'engaging in fascist and other anti-popular activities', but also against those 'who violate the rules and regulations of the higher educational establishments'¹⁵. In this way the academic staff of the Sofia University insisted that an end be put to the opportunities provided to young people of low cultural standards or poor training to stay in the student auditoriums. Along these lines was also the amendment, originating from the University, to the effect that all young assistant pro-

fessors without exception be appointed only after they have successfully passed the exams and have been elected by the Faculty Council, etc.¹⁶.

In the third place, a principled change was introduced at the University in 1956 as regards the role of lecturers in the students' preparations for the examination sessions. On April 4, 1956, Professor A. Kisselinchev spoke quite unambiguously before the members of the Academic Council against some attempts at applying the old approach of 'guardianship' and 'exclusive control' over the university students. Until 1956, such ideas were very seldom heard. Subsequently the sober views found increasing support. In this way, the completely primitive practice of 'assistance by guardianship' which lecturers and assistant professors had rendered the students during the personality cult period and which amounted to treating the students as if they were literally retarded, was abandoned. An important aspect of the practical activities of university scholars was thus freed from the clutches of rampant redtape. The professor occupied with dignity his place in the lecture theatre as the most knowledgeable and sought-after assistant of university students who were truly aspiring to the summits of knowledge.

A new interesting element of the training process at the University, which has come to the fore since 1956 has been the ultimate elucidation of the role and development prospects of the scientific libraries attached to the faculties. In the years of the personality cult, up to the mid-'50s, a concept had taken shape, according to which they were to be gradually done away with. Their stocks of books were to be 'rechannelled' to the central University library. The shortage of books and of funds for the acquisition of new scientific publications was brought forward as the only consideration favouring such a 'reform'. At a stormy Academic Council meeting on May 9, 1956, the sober-minded professors convincingly proved the necessity of the faculty libraries as indispensable study and scientific laboratories for the students in all departments of the University. It was recommended that the Rectorate make efforts to solicit additional funds for the purchase of scientific literature. In this way the faculty libraries of the University, accrued with stupendous efforts, were saved¹⁷. One of the indispensable elements of the study process inherited from the past has been preserved, which consists in the gradual enlargement of the collections of books in the future, and will continuously enhance its role in the training of young university graduates.

An indication of a new attitude to the study process on the part of the Academic community in the late 1950s was the turn-back to the useful University traditions that was effected at that time. An end was put to all

attempts to change the name of the University or to do away with some of its typical symbols and external elements. On May 30, 1956, after the Academic Council stated that since September 9, 1944, 'there has been no tradition of the ceremonious presentation of graduation diplomas to the university students on their graduation', a decision was taken that the question should be elucidated as to 'when that presentation is to take place and whether it should be at the faculties or centrally'¹⁸. Past experience of the period up to the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria began to be studied. The view predominated that ceremonious presentations of the graduation diplomas had to be organized within the individual faculties.

The idea of making special distinctive insignia to be presented to the graduates of the Sofia University matured somewhat later. These signs are presented together with the graduation certificates. A vote was taken for the first time on the writing of the history of the oldest higher educational establishment in the country. And notwithstanding the fact that up to 1958 the implementation of that programme was still within the sphere of new ideas, it is quite obvious that since the late 1940s the concept of higher University education as a complicated intertwining of tradition and innovation, has also become one of the fruit-bearing elements in the style of thinking and action applied by the academic authorities.

The foundations of a number of other positive trends in the work of scholars and lecturers were laid in the mid-'50s, which also favourably affected the overall socialist upsurge of the Sofia University: starting from 1957–1958, the Ministry of Public Education began to increase the funds needed by the University to tackle its most pressing problems associated with the material base used in the study process. Within a single year, the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics in Anton Ivanov Blvd. was reconstructed and by using that premise, the University doubled its training facilities.

The supply of scientific literature from abroad began at accelerated rates as the foreign exchange needed was provided. For the first time since the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria, in 1957–1958 the system of granting leaves for the tackling of creative problems became an enduring factor promoting the self-improvement of lecturers as specialists. The approach to the expansion of direct links with other higher educational establishments in the world began to be discussed, too, as their experience in university training could contribute to the enrichment of work at the oldest university in Bulgaria.

The newly elected rectorate, headed by Academician Daki Yordanov, came up with a new concept on the work of the governing body of the University, the Academic Council, as early as 1956. Its underlying principle was the view that 'it must not deal with figures', i.e.: the bureaucratic and dogmatic methods of 'direct control' had to be abolished, as it had to work with generalizations, evaluations and recommendations aimed at the consolidation of achievements and the elimination of weaknesses¹⁹. In this way the governing body of the University became a centre accruing and enriching the new original experience coming to the fore in the practice of training. The Academic Council began to free the faculties from its petty guardianship and to expand their opportunities for a creative analysis of the prospects facing the development of higher education.

In this sense there is full justice to say that by the end of the transition period from capitalism to socialism, the training process at the Sofia University was substantially renewed. It was characterized by the simultaneous emergence of two main lines of development. One line was the complete elimination of the normative basis and methodology whereby knowledge had been presented and assimilated in the old bourgeois university of Bulgaria. The study process dominating at the Sofia University until September 9, 1944 was substituted, by revolutionary means, by a new system of guidance and supervision of the training and educative work of a socialist type. It was based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In comparison with the standards on September 9, 1944, the Sofia University had made a huge step forward in improving the mechanism of university education management.

At the same time, however, the outlines of a second trend in development took shape: the socialist process of learning was freed from the dogmas and cut and dried patterns born under the influence of the personality cult, the deformations it had engendered in the theory and practice of socialist construction in the early 1950s. Although not absolutely all deformations engendered by the personality cult had been done away with, taking clearer line, in 1958 the Sofia University began performing its functions as a leading establishment of higher learning in Bulgaria, playing a unique role in the further upsurge of the cultural revolution accompanying the construction of the developed socialist society.

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A crucial period in the development of university science. Since its very foundation, the Sofia University has been the centre of science in

Bulgaria. The concept that 'he who does not himself engage in research cannot teach science'²⁰ is deeply embedded in the consciousness of professors, associate professors and assistant professors as soon as they are appointed. As an understanding about the social functions of the university scholar, it has been carried over under socialism, too. And yet, it should be pointed out that the period of transition (1944–1958) was one of the most difficult stages in the development of university science in Bulgaria. The reasons were complex and closely interwoven with the sweeping reforms taking place in Bulgaria as part of the struggle for the triumph of the socialist social system.

At the beginning, in the wake of September 9, 1944, some of the bourgeois professors were removed from the University. Those who professed reactionary fascist views or had been involved in antipopular activities were convicted by the People's Court in 1945. Indeed, they were a small minority among the democratically minded Bulgarian scientists who sided with the people's rule. And yet 'the elite' of Bulgarian bourgeois science disappeared. In this way the factor ensuring the relationship between Bulgarian and foreign science until 1944 was eliminated.

It should be added that in the wake of the Second World War, in the conditions of the stupendous revolutionary changes taking place in the world, the old international scientific relations maintained by the bourgeois University of Bulgaria were utterly destroyed. At the same time, due to the vast number of problems that the people's democracies were tackling, the new contacts between their universities were not established very quickly. In the conditions of the Cold War that began in the late 1940s, the exchange of literature and scientific information with the industrial capitalist states was almost nil. The new political conditions in which the Bulgarian University had to develop after September 9, 1944, temporarily restricted its opportunities of taking an active part in world scientific life, one of the most important stimulators of creative energy.

During the transition from capitalism to socialism in Bulgaria, the cadre situation of the University's scientific potential was complicated as it had never been before or after that period. The overwhelming part of the old generation of professors upheld various objectivistic views about the world and the laws of human society. That is why in the conditions of extensive socialist construction, an overall theoretical and methodological reorganization of the scientific cadres that had remained was needed. The mastering of dialectical and historical materialism, however, is in itself a complicated task consuming considerable energy. It

was additionally complicated by the absence of prominent communist scientists in all spheres of knowledge armed with the ideas of dialectical materialism, who could take the reorganization in their hands. The majority of communist scientists were either young people, or had comparatively modest scientific contributions because of their great preoccupation with political work in the course of the antifascist struggle waged in the country until the end of the Second World War. That meant that those who commanded true scientific criteria for the elucidation of objective reality still needed a considerable expansion of their intellectual powers. And vice versa, the knowledgeable scholars had to redirect their creative thinking to cover the trends which had until then been beyond their scope of view because of their methodological weaknesses.

It is therefore clear that in such a cadre situation, epoch-making scientific discoveries could hardly be expected, all the more so because alongside their scientific research, the university lecturers were overburdened by the huge amount of work required for shaping the new socialist character of student training.

Another important destabilizing factor affecting the state of university science between 1944 and 1958 was rooted in the profound revolutionary changes taking place in Bulgaria's scientific sphere in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) was thoroughly reorganized. It ceased being a semi-closed scientific establishment primarily concerned with the humanities, which under capitalism possessed neither the necessary material base nor the requisite scientific and cadre potential to engage in large-scale research. An extensively ramified network of new research institutes covering most of the pure sciences²¹ was established within the BAS. At the same time, a number of new higher establishments of learning and research and development centres were set up, the so called 'departmental research institutes'. Their purpose was to tackle specific problems of the various spheres of practice. Indeed the majority of these new centres of Bulgarian science were young and unconsolidated institutions. The state began to set aside huge resources to secure their lasting stabilization. The constant needs of socialist practice and the creative ambitions of their staff further contributed to the emergence of a number of increasingly serious rivals of the University as the main centre for the development of Bulgarian science.

Hence the emergence and maturing of a number of new views amidst the academic body during the period of transition as to the ways along which university-based science was to develop in future. Taken sepa-

rately, they are a testimony of the disrupted unanimity and the shaken self-confidence of university professors regarding their efforts to find a place of dignity for themselves in view of the new distribution of forces in the field of Bulgarian science. Some began to suggest 'that research work must be done in the BAS and the departmental institutes, while the university and other establishments of higher education should train scientific cadres who are to follow closely the achievements of science and to reckon with them'²².

Another group of University professors adopted the view that 'scientific policies should be directed solely to the elucidation of the main problems in the individual special sciences'²³, i.e. the university staff was to endeavour to keep its monopoly in the sphere of scientific theory, offering discoveries as a methodological starting point from which the institutes were to resolve further the practical tasks of socialist construction.

A third category of university scholars upheld the theory that in the scientific sphere in the country at that time 'the range of subjects covered by our research should be determined solely by the specific needs of practice and that the development of science, whether faster or more slowly, in one field or another, should depend exclusively on the specific needs of practice'²⁴. In their ambition to 'outstrip' the newly established scientific centres by 'seizing' scientific ground, these people became side-tracked along the lines of fragmentary knowledge and theoretical impotence in their creative efforts.

It was in these circumstances and with these concepts about the future of the Sofia University as a leading scientific centre in Bulgaria that the country's oldest higher educational establishment began to look for its place and character within the new structure of the scientific sphere transformed in the course of the socialist revolution.

Between the late 1940s and mid-'50s, the main efforts in this sphere were aimed at the building of an entirely new system, within whose framework scientific research at the University began. In the first place, great efforts were made to do away with the chaos in the sphere of scientific research. It was for the first time under socialism that research ceased being the result of the personal subjective preferences of professors and associate professors alone. The first plans for scientific research were worked out. Mostly annual, they included themes which, according to the collective assessment of the staffs of the different departments were indeed of interest to the practice of socialist construction.

Hence the second principle of the system: the close intertwining of scientific research and the objective needs of the socialist society. Under

capitalism, the Bulgarian scientists spontaneously attuned their interests and efforts as researchers to the social commission. It was only in the late '40s and the '50s that university science became a consciously guided process aimed at solving the problems arising in the construction of the socialist society.

Supervision and accountability were also made part and parcel of the new system that the development of science in the Sofia University followed during the transition period. At the end of each calendar year, progress reports were made at the departments on the fulfilment of personal research plans. After that the Faculty Councils heard the generalized reports of the staffs of the departments and through the dean's offices summed up the main achievements for the benefit of the Academic Council. In the final count, the collective governing body of the University gave an overall evaluation of the successes scored in the development of science. The University's general research plan was drafted on the basis of the research plans of the individual faculties.

Parallel to this basic system of control and accountability, the practice of the so-called 'annual scientific and theoretical conferences' was introduced. At the beginning of the transition period they were annually held at the faculties. Each department submitted to the conference its latest works published during the previous calendar year. At the conference itself, in the presence of lecturers, university students and citizens, the work under consideration was reviewed by two experts in the respective field. The author defended his or her theory as set forth in the publications. Then the work was publicly discussed. At the beginning that practice influenced positively the ideological, theoretical and methodological reorganization of the university scholars. It was conducive to the creation of an atmosphere of discussion of the newly uncovered scientific facts and as a whole helped implement the scientific plans of the following years at higher quality levels in that oldest higher educational establishment in Bulgaria.

The system under which university science developed in the transition period had two more elements. For the first time since 1948 post-graduate students were introduced at the University as a way of training young specialists. Talented specialists who had graduated after September 9, 1944 were chosen to do post-graduate work. An endeavour was prevalent to entrust the earliest crop of post-graduate students to eminent scholars, whereas the development of post-graduate studies was based on individual work plans for the three years of post-graduate studies.

An indubitable achievement of the scientific life at the University during the transition from capitalism to socialism was the student scientific creativity that developed extensively in the late 1940s. Between 1948 and 1958 it was considered an element of the scientific life at the University and was therefore reported together with the achievements of the lecturers. Scores of student study groups began to function at the departments. Their most active members were the prospective post-graduate students and assistant professors both at the University and at the newly established institutes with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The fullest possible picture of the conditions under which university science in Bulgaria developed in the transition period (1948–1958) calls for the mention of yet another specificity, as it was not typical of the later stages in the development of socialist Bulgaria. Until the mid '50s, the personality cult found its way into the style of the Party and state leadership in the country. In the sphere of science it was a hindrance, distorting a number of correct principles embedded in its foundations since the victory of the socialist revolution. The cadres in charge of scientific research did not possess the skill of creative thinking. Dogmatism, the sectarian adherence to the concepts of 'socialist' and 'bourgeois' science, the complete rejection and neglect of the historic discoveries charting the course of the inchoate revolution in science and technology worldwide and the endeavour towards high-handed administration and decreed scientific thinking set in imposed moulds were only part of the adverse consequences of the personality cult for the development of university science. Therefore, a satisfactory explanation of the tortuous road traversed by university science between 1944 and 1958 can be only provided if all these factors and circumstances are taken into consideration as they exerted their influence on scientific life at the oldest establishment of higher learning in Bulgaria.

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New trends emerged in the development of Bulgarian university science in the mid '50s. They were associated with the upbuilding of the socialist society in the country which in turn made it possible to overcome the personality cult methods of thinking and management in the scientific sphere. The international links of the University expanded along with its increasingly closer integration with the world scientific process. A number of creative ideas were formulated aimed at diversifying the thematic scope and approaches to the key natural sciences and the huma-

nities. By the end of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in 1958, they could not possibly renew university science in all respects, but nevertheless, the preparation of those objective conditions began with them, which made it possible for Bulgaria to be on a par with the highest achievements of world science at the stage of construction of the developed socialist society in the '60s and '70s. The reasons underlying the upsurge of university science at the end of the transition period can be graded in the following order.

After the death of Stalin and the collapse of the cult to his personality in the USSR, the dogmatic and cut-and-dried methods used in the guidance of science gradually began to erode. In 1954 the practice of committing to memory Stalin's works was abandoned at the University of Sofia. In this way the university lecturers acquired great creative freedom and the possibility to take up in earnest the mastering of the Marxist-Leninist methodology for the scientific investigation of processes and phenomena. This tendency, however, became irreversible in the spring of 1956 when the April Plenum of the CC of the BCP condemned the personality cult of Vulko Chervenkov and formulated new approaches to the development of science and culture in socialist Bulgaria.

The second objective reason for the new stage in the development of university science in the transition period was associated with the advancement of science itself. In the ten years that had passed since the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria, the cadre problem was resolved in general terms as regards the scientific sphere. By the mid-'50s, the practice of the Sofia University already evinced a sufficient number of facts to conclude that university science already needed not so much extensive development as development in depth; the functioning of the socialist society began to bring to the fore more new problems and the University proved unprepared to resolve operatively all tasks.

For instance, at that time the theme of using nuclear power for peaceful purposes became especially topical. Up to the middle of the '50s, the facilities of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics offered no opportunities for serious research in that field. Polymers, qualitatively new methods in genetics and biology began to be increasingly discussed, and these were all spheres for which the Sofia University proved incapable to be actively involved either. In sum, the irreversible victory of the socialist social system in the country and the serious achievements of the scientific and technical revolution worldwide began to make imperative demands on university science to break free from the restrictions imposed by the complicated international situation and the wrong methods of

management of the personality cult dominating until the middle of the '50s.

In the period between 1956 and 1958, a breakthrough was effected at the University in satisfying the pressing need of scientific literature for its staff. As a result of the thorough analysis made by the Academic Council of the state and work of the University library, all weaknesses existing up until then were eliminated. Credits granted for the purchase of foreign literature were substantially increased. In 1958, the Academic Council already drew the conclusion: 'We exchange books with all countries – the USSR, Britain, the USA, Italy, Sweden, France, but we do not get as many copies (of the titles, author's note) as we want. Recently our demands have been increasing'²⁵. This fact is a cogent proof of the breakthrough that had taken place in the possibilities of Bulgarian university science to maintain effective contacts with the world scientific community.

Substantial improvements were introduced after 1956 in the conditions of scholarly work in the library. The auxiliary personnel servicing the readers was increased. A research group was set up with the University library which began to work on 'problems of librarian and bibliographic character, related to University needs'²⁶. The exchange of books with foreign libraries was substantially increased. Phototype publication began of rare books and old newspapers.

The end of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in Bulgaria wound up with the surmounting of the adverse international isolation that Bulgarian university science had found itself in during the late 1940s. Whereas in 1956 the Academic Council found out that 'there are departments of staffs, in which not a single member has specialized abroad, including the heads of the departments'²⁷, at the end of 1958 a new solution was already taking shape. Out of the 35 researchers at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, 30 had already specialized abroad at least once. At the Faculty of Law, out of 60 lecturers, 11 had been abroad, at the Faculty of Biology, Geography and Geology, out of 85 people – 17 had been abroad, etc. In this way parallel to the triumph of socialism, a better rate of ensuring constant and direct relationships between Bulgarian science and its related spheres abroad was attained. 'At this rate, each lecturer will be able to specialize abroad once in six years, or at least four times during his time of service at the University'²⁸.

Signs appeared of the future active involvement of the Sofia University in international scientific life. This trend became particularly conspicuous in the sphere of Bulgarian and Slavic philology. In the autumn

of 1955, a delegation of scholars from Bulgaria including the University lecturers Prof. L.Andreichin and Prof. I.Lekov, took part in the Tenth International Congress of Historians, held in Rome. That was the first such case after the Second World War. During the proceedings of the Congress, from September 1 to 3, 1955, the first international meeting of Slavic scholars was arranged by the Slavic Commission at the International Committee for Historical Sciences. It discussed some linguistic and literary problems related to the development of the Slavic cultures. On behalf of Bulgaria, Professor L.Andreichin presented a general paper on the emergence and evolution of the Bulgarian literary language, while Professor I.Lekov made a comparative review of the processes related to the emergence of the Slavic languages²⁹.

The next step was the formation of the first Bulgarian-Soviet expedition of linguistic research headed by Professor Stoiko Stoikov and Professor S.Bernshein, which began work on the drafting of an atlas of Bulgarian dialects. Bulgaria became the second Balkan state and the fifth in Europe after France, Italy, the GDR and Romania to get that extremely valuable and important work, characterizing the peculiarities of the Bulgarian dialects³⁰.

A new session of the International Slavic Committee was held from May 17 through 22, 1956. With the active cooperation of the Bulgarian university delegation, it decided that the Fourth International Congress of Slavic Scholars be held in Moscow in September 1958. The International Committee recommended that national Slavic committees be set up to take in their hands the coordination of the new joint initiatives that had good prospects of being carried out. Bulgaria was the first country to put this decision into practice. The newly constituted National Committee for Slavic Studies included Academician V.Georgiev, Professor L.Andreichin, Professor V.Velchev, Professor E.Georgiev, Professor I.Lekov, Professor K.Mirchev, Professor G.Tsanev and T.Todorov – all of them scholars of worldwide renown credited with a significant contribution to Slavic research.

Direct scientific contacts with world famous Slavic scholars intensified. Among them were V.Vinogradov (the USSR), A.Belic (Yugoslavia), Ettore La Tatto (Italy), Andre Mesin (France), A.Petrovic (Denmark), M.Foster (the GDR), Al Niel (Britain), Roman Jacobson (USA) and many others. In this way as well as through the active participation of a Bulgarian delegation in the Fourth International Congress of Slavic Studies, held in Moscow in 1958, the University affirmed Bulgaria's positions as the classical country of Slavic studies making funda-

mental contribution to the overall development of that huge part of the humanities. A direct confirmation of this statement was also the fact that precisely during that period, i.e. the late 1950s, the number of foreign students enrolling at Bulgaria's oldest establishment of higher learning sharply increased. In 1958 the University authorities officially reported: 'attending our University are students from China, Korea, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Vietnam, the GDR, Algeria, Mexico, Indonesia, Belgium and Romania'³¹.

The first foreign post-graduate students also enrolled at the Sofia University to develop as well-trained scientists. They did not hide their satisfaction with the fact that they had the opportunity of advancing in science guided by the remarkable Bulgarian Slavic scholars. For instance, post-graduate student V. Andreev from Leningrad stated quite unambiguously in an interview for the University newspaper: 'We have come here not to see Bulgaria alone. It is our goal to use the experience which has been accumulated here and to study under the guidance of the remarkable Bulgarian scholars. I am a linguist specializing in literary theory. I have long been studying Bulgarian literature, but it is only now that I have the opportunity of a close investigation'³².

The last few years of the transition in Bulgaria's development from capitalism to socialism were a period when the scientific atmosphere at the University began to break free from the confinement of the personality cult dogmas and cut-and-dried patterns. An end was put to the futile and imitative adducing of quotations. The scientists opted above all for the methodology of a thorough analysis of facts and phenomena. The efforts aimed at the structuring of the overall thinking process in science in conformity with the methodological principles of creative Marxism-Leninism entered a new, more mature phase. And although some years had yet to pass until the birth of new brilliant achievements of University science when a new generation of scientists joined the staff in the late 1960s, a visible intellectual wisening of the university staff began to be felt.

The elementary understanding of the relationship between science and practice which until the mid-'50s lent a fragmentary character to some research plans, was gradually outlived. Noteworthy in this respect was the thesis formulated by the new University rector elected in 1956, Academician Daki Yordanov. 'In November 1957 he stated in the Academic Council: 'All achievements of science in the USSR are not the work of production, but of joint academic work by physicists and mathematicians. One should not work only on what pleases production'³³. While the idea that science and practice were related was not re-

jected in principle, the concept began to gain ground that not everything born by science should necessarily be applied in socialist construction at once. Ever since, the research plans of the University have been drafted on the basis of a realistic assessment of the significance of a certain range of scientific problems rather than on the suggestions of 'various departments'.

A trend towards the further unburdening of the University lecturers from the unbearable training and social preoccupations, began to take shape. Positive changes were also introduced in the scientific and theoretical conferences held at the faculties till the end of the transition period. Some scientific and training units gave up the annual conferences. That tendency later gained increasing ground chiefly for two reasons: first, by 1958 it was assumed that the process of the ideological retraining of the cadres had been completed in general terms. Therefore it had become superfluous to analyze each year the overall scientific output from a methodological point of view.

In the second place, practice has shown that a sufficient number of major works meriting a thorough scientific discussion at faculty level do not appear every year. In the spirit of the understanding that science is a creative process of the unfettered individuality of the scholar, relying on a correct world outlook, the faculties began to submit for discussion at conferences only research works making a definite contribution to science. An endeavour to diversify the methods of scientific research became apparent. The idea was discussed whether science did not stand to gain if the chaotic faculty scientific conferences were replaced by collective scientific forums. At these forums, scientists engaged in a special field of science, regardless of where they work, would have the opportunity of presenting their achievements and of tackling serious problems with the joint efforts of the entire scientific potential of the respective field. The discussion began of the first research works published after their authors had specialized abroad, and this introduced new fresh ideas in the development of university science.

However, the picture of university science at the end of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism would be incomplete, if the new trends in post-graduate studies and student scientific creativity that had emerged around 1958 were not mentioned. The first, second, third and fourth crop of post-graduate students defended, with few exceptions, their candidate theses around 1956–1957. Post-graduate studies bore out the great opportunities they offered for the training of young scholars and for improving the country's scientific potential. The Sofia Univer-

sity plays the key role in the acceptance of that new form of the development of science in Bulgaria.

Student scientific creativity began to mature gradually. The requirement that students be at all costs enlisted en masse in study circles was abandoned. On October 23, 1957, on the initiative of the Rector Academician Daki Yordanov, the Academic Council endorsed a new guiding principle in this sphere, too: 'The most important thing is to scout for those students who have a spark of talent, so that an initial type of a research worker might be obtained. The massive enlistment is not that much necessary. It would operate as a reference and have the value of a reference report. Whereas the study circles will be required to work scientifically'³⁴.

In line with the new concepts, only talented students were involved in the study circles. The trend gained ground whereby the papers prepared in the study circle developed later into annual scholarly works or diploma works. This heightened the students' interest and widened the opportunities offered to young authors to work on a given problem for several years running.

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It is obvious from all mentioned above that during the period under consideration, university science passed through all trials and tribulations typical of the socialist cultural revolution in the transition period in Bulgaria. Until the mid-'50s what was new and constructive in science was fighting for survival by further developing and enriching the democratic trends in science inherited from the past. The five-year long attempt of the personality cult to impose a dogmatic way of thinking was foiled. Scientific knowledge itself entered in trenchant contradiction with the fettering stipulations of sectarianism and voluntarism. Learning its lesson from its own practice, in the late 1950s the academic community of the University enthusiastically undertook to clear away all barriers hampering progress in science. The trend that science should go in the wake of politics, proved superfluous, offering no prospects. Life called for a new choice, viz. that the policy of building the socialist society lean on science. The new ideas embedded in the conception on the development of scientific research at the Sofia University, became at the end of the period of transition the groundwork and earnest for the later affirmation of some of the best achievements of Bulgarian national science.

Re In the decade between 1948 and 1958, the Sofia University did not succeed in overcoming all setbacks typical of the comparatively young universities in the world, working in a small country of medium development as Bulgaria was at the beginning of socialist construction. At the same time, without the lessons and experience accumulated at that time, the reality of a later date would not have been possible, viz. that small states like Bulgaria also occupy a worthy place in the front ranks of the world's scientific and cultural progress.

Chapter 5

THE KLIMENT OF OHRID UNIVERSITY OF SOFIA AT THE STAGE OF BUILDING A DEVELOPED SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Structural changes in the organization of the training process. In the 1960s, university education in Bulgaria embarked upon a qualitatively new stage of development. The country's accelerated socio-economic and intellectual progress under victorious socialism raised higher demands to the authorities and the academic staff of the Sofia University. The April 1956 policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party of a dynamic development of the productive forces and of socialist relations, of positive changes in the social, class and state structure, in the organizational and government forms of the overall social system, education included, whose goal it has been to shape versatile personalities, paved the way for the further development of higher university education.

In line with the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the BCP, a law concerning the closer relationship of schools with life was passed in 1959. It provided a powerful impetus to the implementation of the polytechnical conceptions in education. The law referred chiefly to the problems of primary and secondary education, but it also settled some matters concerning higher education. The main requirement in this sphere was the fuller link-up between training and productive work, the practice of socialist construction. Hence the necessity that the activities of the scientific and educative potential of the Sofia University be also channelled to the solution of the pending tasks of the socialist society¹.

The syllabuses of all University faculties were reviewed and changed in the spirit of the fundamental principles underlying that law. These new administrative documents determined both the sciences taught at the university and their content and volume in compliance with the special profiles in the training of university students as future specialists. The continuous development and deepening of scientific knowledge, of the dynamic scientific and technical revolution made imperative the reduction and methodological processing of the new scientific information in view of the specific needs of the process of instruction. That is why the efforts of the administrative and Party leaderships of the faculties, of the

Rectorate and the Academic Council were directed above all at putting the syllabuses on a par with the standards achieved of the sciences taught and studied at the Sofia University. The meaning of the changes in the syllabuses boiled down to unburdening the courses of lectures, the textbooks and study aids from superfluous descriptions and repetitions, and to updating the information offered to students; the elements of problem-oriented training were to be reaffirmed².

The greater efficiency and better quality of student training at the Sofia University depended on the positive and timely structural changes introduced in the syllabuses. A new distribution was introduced of the sciences studied, so that the greater educative and training possibilities of the study process might be revealed. New special courses in nuclear physics, semiconductors, electronics, biophysics, radiochemistry, radiobiology, calculus, mathematical logic, linguistics, stylistics, etc. were opened to help the more detailed familiarization of the students with their chosen subject. Some cuts were made in the number of hours of lectures and seminars per week with the aim of reducing the weekly occupation of university students. In this way the young specialists had more time to spend on individual work and investigations. The revised syllabuses also made for a more even distribution of examinations, and their abnormal clustering during some terms was eliminated. The introduction of a second subject for the university students training to become teachers was also conducive to the improvement of the syllabuses. That measure became a fine condition ensuring the more purposeful employment of young specialists as school teachers³.

In the working out of the new syllabuses, special attention was paid in the 1960s to the production and teaching practice of students. The duration of the various kinds of practice was substantially increased and their place within the system of practical training was more fortunately defined and linked more closely with socialist development.

During that period, changes were also introduced in the faculty structure of the University. As the need arose of expanding university education in some subjects, new faculties were opened, while the old ones were enlarged by the addition of new subjects.

One of the leading faculties at the Sofia University in the 1960s was the Faculty of Philosophy and History. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy has been the methodological basis and world outlook of the entire social knowledge and of all other sciences studied in the different faculties. Dialectical and historical materialism, history of world and Bulgarian philosophy and especially the history of Marxist philosophy, criticism of

formal logic, sociology, psychology, ethics and aesthetics were presented and taught at a high theoretical level. The thematic plans of lectures and seminars and of the special courses were improved. The lecturers diversified their courses of lectures with the achievements of the respective fields of science. A great achievement of the scientific and teaching staff on Marxist-Leninist philosophy was its specialized teaching in compliance with the special field of interest of the students of mathematics, physics, chemistry, education, Bulgarian language and literature and the other subjects. A host of talented lecturers came to the fore: Professor Kiril Vassilev, Professor Nikolai Iribadjakov, PhD, Professor Girgin Girginov, Professor Peiko Slavov, Professor Angel Bunkov, Professor Stefan Tsonevski, Associate Professor Dobrin Spassov, Associate Professor Alka Nenova, Associate Professor Ivanka Apostolova, Associate Professor B. Mountyan, Associate Professor Aristotle Gavrilov, Associate Professor Vassil Ivanov, Associate Professor Radi Radev, Associate Professor Ilia Tassev, Associate Professor G. Grozev, Associate Professor K. Tomov, to mention but a few⁴.

A Psychology Department headed by Professor Gencho Piriyov was established in 1964. The lectures in the various fields of psychology were competently presented by Professor Gencho Piriyov, Associate Professor Georgi Yolov, Associate Professor Ivan Netov, Chief Assistant Professor Tsani Tsanev and others⁵.

In the late 1960s, sociology was included at the Department of Dialectical and Historical Materialism. The study of sociology encompassed the following subjects: general sociology, history of sociology, statistics, demography, higher mathematics, methodology of concrete social surveys, introduction of cybernetics, etc.⁶.

In the 1960s the training in ethics and aesthetics rested on much more solid scientific foundations. The lecture courses in ethics were presented by the highly qualified Associate Professor Lyubomir Dramaliev, Associate Professor Mois Semov, Chief Assistant Professor Kiril Neshev and some others. Associate Professor Isaac Passi and Associate Professor Ivan Slavov read original lectures in aesthetics⁷. The differentiation of philosophy as a major subject entailed the formation in 1972 of a separate Faculty of Philosophy which incorporated philosophy and pedagogy. This fact is an evidence of the development and growing importance of the philosophical science during the period of further construction of the socialist society.

In the '60s, the teaching of pedagogy at the Sofia University also marked doubtless successes. Working fruitfully and for many years in this

sphere were Professor Naiden Chakurov, Professor Gavril Hroussanov, Professor Zhecho Atanassov, Associate Professor Boris Ivanov, Associate Professor Ivan Ivanov, Associate Professor Banko Ganov, Associate Professor Vera Boicheva, Associate Professor Decho Denev, Associate Professor Stoyan Zhelev, Associate Professor Stoyanka Zhekova, Associate Professor Elka Petrova, Associate Professor Zdravka Ivanova, Associate Professor Stefan Chernev, Associate Professor Marin Baev, Associate Professor Alexander Madjarov, Associate Professor Marin Andreev⁸.

History was the main subject at the Faculty of Philosophy and History. In the '60s it was taught at the University by the most prominent Bulgarian historians. Many of them have high scientific degrees and titles: academicians Dimiter Dimitrov, Dimiter Kossev, Hristo Hristov and Vladimir Topencharov, corresponding members D. Angelov, A. Bourmov, T. Vlahov, N. Todorov, doctors of history H. Danov, N. Todorov, B. Tsvetkova and others⁹.

Expedient structural changes at the departments were carried out in the '60s. Greater specialization began of the undergraduate history students. The differentiation into a number of subjects: archaeology, archives, Bulgarian history, modern and most modern general history, old and medieval general history, history of the USSR and the CPSU, history of Byzantium and the Balkan peoples and ethnography, met to a higher degree the needs of the socialist cultural development. This system of training was instrumental in the formation of knowledgeable specialists to work in the museums and archives or train young research workers.

The Faculty of Philology with its differentiated speciality of Slavic languages and literature operated successfully in the '60s. In 1965, several Slavic specialities became integrated in what is today the Faculty of Slavic Philology. Journalism remained a part of that Faculty. One language and one literature department was set up for each one of the languages. A department of general linguistics, a department of literary theory and departments of language and literature teaching were established. The main subject at the Faculty of Slavic Languages and Literature was Bulgarian language and literature, which in the 1960s and early 1970s gained a lot in terms of lecturing staff and the process of training and education¹⁰. Lectures were given by professors Kiril Mirchev, S. Stoikov, Stoyan Stoyanov and K. Popov, by associate professors M. Yanakiev, P. Pashov, H. Purvev, Venche Popova, Todor Boyadjiev, Stefan Brezinski and others. Bulgarian language and literature continued to gain grounds as one of the most important disciplines in the Slavic Faculty. The basic

courses of lectures on the history of Bulgarian literature were presented by the prominent Bulgarian scholars Professor P.Dinekov, Professor G.Vesselinov, Professor Z.Avdjiev, Professor Rozalia Linkova and others¹¹.

The Faculty of Western Philologies was founded in 1965 and included seven subjects: French, Italian, Spanish, German, English, Classical and Eastern languages. The Faculty integrated the subjects that had already been established and most of which had consummate training, methodological, and research character. French and Italian were united in a common Department of Roman Philology. Together with the department of the methodology of foreign language teaching, a total of 7 departments were formed at the Faculty¹².

The Faculty of Western Languages and Literature ensures studies along four fundamental lines of scientific interest: Romance, Germanic, Classical Languages and Oriental Languages. Its purpose is to provide training in the major languages, literatures and cultures of the peoples from the five continents, old and modern alike. It trains teachers in foreign languages for the Bulgarian educational establishments and research institutes. Translation is an extensive field of useful work for revealing the most valuable aspects of the lifestyle and culture of the non-Slavic world, as well as for the familiarization of the other peoples with the cultural and creative achievements of the Bulgarian nation. The lectures have been entrusted to scientists and lecturers of academic rank: Professor T.Tomov, Professor I.Petkanov, Professor B.Nikolov, Professor L.Ognyanov, Professor M.Minkov, Professor A.Nichev, Professor K.Vlahov, Professor N.Ilieva, Professor R.Gandeva, Associate Professor I.Simeonov, Associate Professor B.Djonov, Associate Professor G.Pavlov, Associate Professor T.Sarafov, Associate Professor E.Boev. They are assisted by experienced lecturers and assistant professors in practical language study. The staffs of the departments at the Faculty write and publish textbooks, grammars, readers, dictionaries, conversation books and other aids to be used by the university students and the Bulgarian people. The lectures on all theoretical sciences, with the exception of Classical Languages and Literature, are in the respective language. Special language laboratories have been appointed for the needs of language instruction. The best students are sent abroad to polish up their language training¹³.

Profound changes were effected in the 1960s in the system of higher education in the law. The application of the new system of management of the national economy conditioned the need for a better knowledge of

the laws, so that the cadres trained at the Faculty could work in the administrative and economic bodies and not only in the sphere of jurisdiction. In 1966, the syllabus envisaged the study of a number of new subjects, including contracts between economic organizations, economic management, legal problems of the CMEA, and the like¹⁴. Lectures in law were given by the most eminent scholars at the Faculty like Professor P.Stainov, Professor Lyuben Vassilev, Professor Angel Angelov, Professor Vladimir Koutikov, Professor Stefan Pavlov, Professor N.Mevorah, Professor Boris Spassov, Professor Mihail Andreev, Professor H.Vakarelski, Professor A.Kozhouharov, Professor Z.Stalev, Professor L.Radouilski, Associate Professor S.Stefanova, Associate Professor G.Kostadinov.

During that period mathematical training at the University also developed successfully. In 1963, the Faculty of Mathematics branched off from the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics with a single subject of study – mathematics. Later on it was called Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics. The courses of lectures and the special courses were entrusted to leading Bulgarian mathematicians: Academician L.Iliev, Professor B.Petkanchin, A.Mateev, Professor Y.Tagamlichki, Professor Blagovest Dolapchiev, Professor B.Sendov, Associate Professor A.Gyonov, Associate Professor D.Doichinov, Associate Professor N.Martinov, Associate Professor S.Skordev, Associate Professor D.Dobrev, Associate Professor P.Shopov, Associate Professor T.Genchov, Associate Professor Ivan Chobanov and others.

An experiment was launched in 1970 of integrating the activities of the Faculty of Mathematics and the Mathematics and Computer Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. By a decree of the Council of Ministers dated December 30, 1970, a new model of the training of cadres in mechanics was introduced and the Unified Centre of Mathematics and Mechanics was set up, a component part of which was also the Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics. The faculty departments and the sections of the institute were replaced by sectors which ensured the overall training syllabus, lecturing and research work of the unified Centre. They were grouped in three fields: mathematical structures, mathematical backup of computer equipment and cybernetics, and mathematical modelling. The principle of training at several levels was introduced at the Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics¹⁵.

The Faculty of Physics became an independent unit in 1963. The physics of semiconductors was a new subject started that year to train specialists for the needs of Bulgaria's electronic industry. The Faculty

provides training in the following subjects: physics with its subdivisions of physics of solids and nuclear physics; engineering physics with its specialized profiles of nuclear technology, radiophysics and electronics; physics of the earth, atmosphere and outer space with the specialities of meteorology, geophysics and astronomy; training of physics teachers. The department staffs improved the syllabuses. Many of the lecturers at the Faculty of Physics defended in the USSR their dissertations for the scientific degree of candidate of physics. Students at the Faculty of Physics received a good theoretical grounding supplemented by practical laboratory exercises. Some of the graduate students made their diploma works evincing high scientific standards. A system of post-graduate qualification was introduced at the Faculty of Physics¹⁶.

Enrolment at the Faculty of Chemistry increased parallel to the accelerated development of the chemical industry. In 1963 chemistry became an independent faculty with two profiles: industrial and educational, with regular or correspondence courses of study. The syllabuses were changed. The general and specialized courses of lectures were updated in conformity with the achievements of the chemical science. The staff of the Faculty of Chemistry included outstanding Bulgarian scientists: Academician G. Bliznakov, Corresponding Member Nikola Penchev, Professor Hristo Ivanov, Professor A. Sheloudko, Professor Dimiter Simov and others. Laboratory exercises and seminars were characterized by modern standards and apparatus and ended each term with an exam. Some of the students did their field practice in the USSR, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Poland. An undergraduate probationary period was introduced along with a defence of a graduation diploma work.

The establishment of an independent Biology Faculty with two department in 1962 marked an important stage in the development of the biological science and lecturing in biology at the Sofia University. The two departments were biology with three levels of specialization and microbiology with as many specializations. In the 1960s, the facilities of the Faculty of Biology were improved. A variety of up-to-date training and research equipment was supplied. The stock of books of the Faculty library was considerably enlarged with new textbooks and scientific literature. The continuous improvement of the conditions for the training of biology researchers and lecturers opened up opportunities for the training of a great number of foreign students, post-graduate students and specialists attending refresher and specialization courses. What is more, lecturers from the Faculty of Biology were sent to some developing countries to render assistance in the training of biology researchers and lec-

turers. Many of the lecturers at the Faculty of Biology went to specialize at the Moscow University and research institutes of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. At the same time, prominent Soviet biologists visited the Sofia University to present scientific papers, read lectures and give consultations to the lecturers of the Faculty of Biology¹⁷. Student training at the faculty was done by eminent scientists, among them Academician Daki Yordanov, Professor Boris Kitanov, Professor Georgi Georgiev, Professor T. Peshev, Professor G. Kozarov, Professor L. Koichev, Professor Todor Nikolov, Professor R. Popivanov, Professor G. Genchev, Professor Z. Gounchev, Associate Professor G. Goushterov, Associate Professor P. Mihailov, Associate Professor D. Tashev, Associate Professor Angel Angelov and others¹⁸.

The Faculty of Geology and Geography became an independent unit in 1963. The training of young geologists was in the focus of instruction. University geological science ceased being an auxiliary discipline in the training of teachers in the natural sciences. It brought up expert geologists who took part in geological surveys and in production. The specialization of the young cadres was also called for by the rapid development of geological science. New lecturers were attracted to the departments for specialized courses of lecturers. The general and special training of the young cadres enabled them to specialize in geological chemistry, crystallography and laboratory geology to be employed in various kinds of research, etc. A number of lecturers rendered assistance to higher educational establishments and research institutes in Cuba, Mongolia and developing countries like the People's Republic of Congo, Somalia and Zaire¹⁹. The following scholars devoted their knowledge and abilities to the lecturing in geology at the Sofia University in the 1960s: Academician Ivan Kostov, Academician Ekim Bonchev, Corresponding Member Vassil Tsankov, Professor Vassil Vergilov, Professor Georgi Atanasov, Professor Maria Zhelyazkova, Professor Tsonyo Dimitrov, Professor Petko Mandev, and others.

Geography was the other major at the Faculty of Geology and Geography. Its departments were modified and supplemented by lectures in the new scientific fields. The following professors took part with their high professional competence in the training of students: Dimiter Dimitrov, Dinyo Kanev, Milan Georgiev, Mihail Michev, Ivan Velchev, Ignat Penkov, Todor Hristov, et al.

Scientific research at the University. The further development of research at the University was determined by the place, role and significance of Bulgarian science in the upbuilding of the developed socialist society. All BCP congresses in the '60s and '70s called for tying up science more closely with the needs of the national economy, with the problems of socialist practice, with the dynamics of overall social progress. The enhanced social, political and ideological functions of scientific knowledge in Bulgaria were repeatedly emphasized. At the same time, the need for raising the methodological and theoretical standards of scientific research was pointed out. The formation of a new scientific policy of the high-ranking Party and state bodies began in those years. It was conformed to the profound structural changes in the economy through the intensification of material production and in the system of social management and administration. Under the international detente in the '60s and the calm political and socio-psychological atmosphere created in Bulgaria in the wake of the April 1956 Plenum of the CC of the BCP, University scholars unfolded more fully their individual creative energies and attained a full realization of their intellectual potentials and talent. Opportunities were provided for socially useful and free scientific discussions, for a search for original solutions to actual problems.

Under these favourable objective and subjective conditions nationally and internationally, scientific knowledge at the Sofia University marked still greater successes. There was a notable upsurge in the development of the social sciences. Substantial progress was made in all fields of philosophy. The university philosophy scholars worked successfully on the question concerning the object of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in the light of Lenin's idea about the unity of dialectics, logic and epistemology. Their research works were a contribution to the elucidation of reflection as a universal property of matter, the nature of consciousness and the cognitive image, the relationship between practice and knowledge, the relationship between subject and object, and scientific creativity as reflection. Different aspects of the theory of cognition were investigated in monographs and studies by Professor Girgin Girginov, Professor Stefan Tsonevski, Associate Professor B. Mountyan, Associate Professor Aristotle Gavrilov and Associate Professor K. Tomov.

The University scholars in the field of logic successfully tackled problems of dialectical and formal (classical and modern) logic. Professor Angel Bunkov's work 'Dialectical Logic (1971) is a comprehensive and systematic treatise on dialectical logic. The fundamental principles of

modern formal logic of symbols were developed by Professor Dobrin Spassov in his monographs 'Philosophical Introduction to the Logic of Symbols' (1962) and 'Logic of Symbols' (1969). The Leninist stage in the development of Marxist philosophy was studied from various aspects in the collection 'Lenin and Some Problems of Marxist Philosophy' (1970) edited by Professor Kiril Vassilev and Professor Girgin Girginov²⁰.

The problem of historical materialism, sociology and scientific communism have a lasting place in the scientific work of the most eminent philosophy lecturers at the Sofia University. Professor Kiril Vassilev's work 'Introduction to the Philosophy of History' was published in 1961. In it and in other scientific publications, the author expounded in an original and in-depth manner the fundamentals of historical materialism as a relatively independent part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. In 1970 Professor Slavov published his monograph 'General Laws of the Socialist Revolution in the Political Sphere and Their Manifestation in Bulgaria'. A wide range of problems of dialectical materialism, the natural sciences and the developed socialist society being built in Bulgaria were covered by the book of the prominent Bulgarian philosopher Professor Nikolai Iribadjakov, entitled 'Leninism, Philosophy and the Ideological Struggle' (1970)²¹.

The University lecturers in philosophy worked on the methodological aspects of the special sciences. In 1966 Professor Girgin Girginov published his monograph 'Epistemological Problems of Science'. Professor N. Iribadjakov published his 'Philosophy and Biology' in 1967; Associate Professor Ivanka Apostolova studied the philosophical views of physicists and their attitude to dialectical materialism. She proved that the views of famous physicists like M. Plank and A. Einstein had been dialectical in character.

Research on aesthetics in the 1960s at the Sofia University was characterized by a wider range of themes and a new style of thinking apparent in the books, studies and papers published. Credit for the new qualitative stage of aesthetic thinking definitely goes to Professor Isaac Passi and Associate Professor Ivan Slavov. In his publications 'Of Beauty and Art' (1966), 'Philosophical Literary Studies' (1968), 'The Tragic' (1968) and on the funny, I. Passi analyzed the main trends and stages of development of European aesthetics and developed in great depth two basic aesthetic categories: the tragic and the funny. The problems of aesthetics were the overriding ones in the scientific work of Associate Professor Ivan Slavov. He published studies and papers on modernism in art.

The professors and lecturers in pedagogy worked on the scientific groundwork of didactics. The collective work 'Problems of Didactics' was published in 1965. Contributing to the enrichment of the modern theory of education were Professor G.Hroussanov, Associate Professor B.Danailov, Associate Professor Boris Ivanov, Associate Professor Totyu Georgiev, Associate Professor Marin Andreev and others²².

Professor Zhecho Atanassov, PhD, Associate Professor Denev, Associate Professor Stefan Chernev, Associate Professor Marin Andreev and others made a substantial contribution to the scientific elucidation of the different problems of the theory of upbringing and education. Professor Zhecho Atanassov was the most prolific author. His 'Of Man's Duty' (1962), 'For Civilized Conduct', 'Bad Influences and Mental Stability' (1963), 'Second Nature' (1965), 'On Beauty in Behaviour' (1968), 'Philistinism and Its Reincarnations' (1970) and others were welcomed by specialists and the general public.

The 1960s and 1970s were especially rewarding for the creative efforts of the historians at the University who continued their work on the seeking out, processing and publication of the sources of Bulgarian history, using an increasing number of archives and documents. The technical standards of that science were raised. Professor Dimitar Dimitrov, Professor Atanas Milchev, Professor Velizar Velkov and Professor Georgi Georgiev came to the fore in archaeology. Interesting excavations were carried and substantial scientific discoveries made concerning the Neolithic, Aeneolithic and Bronze Ages. The monographs of Professor Hristo Danov, Professor Velizar Velkov and Associate Professor A.Fol dealt with fundamental problems of the economic, social, political and cultural history of the Thracians²³. Thracian studies became an independent science about Antiquity.

Bulgarian medieval studies were also enriched by new research. The publications by Professor A.Bourmov, Professor Dimitar Angelov, Associate Professor Peter Petrov, Associate Professor Vassil Gyuzelev and Associate Professor Mihail Yonov dealt with the genesis, nature and peculiarities of feudalism in Bulgaria, elucidating in greater details the character and specific features of feudal relations in the First and the Second Bulgarian State and during the period of Byzantine domination. Interesting aspects of the relations between Bulgaria and Byzantium were brought to light. Standing out against the background of these achievements is Professor D.Angelov's monograph 'Formation of the Bulgarian Nationality' (1970) written with professional erudition.

The University history lecturers Academician D.Koshev, Academician H.Hristov, Professor N.Todorov, Professor H.Gandev, Professor B.Tsvetkova, Professor P.Petrov, Associate Professor M.Yonov and others contributed to the investigation of the period of Ottoman domination in the Bulgarian lands. They revealed the specific features of Ottoman feudalism and its impact on the economic, social and spiritual life of the Bulgarian and other Balkan peoples, the emergence of capitalist relations in rural and urban economy, etc. The greatest contribution for the scientific elucidation of these problems are the works of Academician Hristo Hristov ('Bulgaria's Liberation and the Policies of the Western States, 1876-1878', Sofia, 1968), Professor Hristo Gandev ('The Emergence of Capitalist Relations in the Farming Economy of North-Western Bulgaria in the 18th Century', Sofia, 1962), Professor Nikolai Todorov ('Philiki Eteria and the Bulgarians'), Sofia, 1965, Professor Bistra Tsvetkova ('Memorable Battle of the Peoples', Varna, 1969.)²⁴.

Historians at the University also made a significant contribution to the elucidation of major episodes and developments in Bulgarian history up to the victory of the 1944 socialist revolution. There appeared increasingly detailed studies of the revolutionary workers' and democratic movement in Bulgaria, of the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution on the BCP and the progressive Bulgarian public, of the international significance of the September 1923 uprising, of the antifascist popular-front policy of the BCP. Studies continued of the political history of Bulgaria under the monarchofascist dictatorship, based on a wider range of documentary sources and their more pronounced theoretical interpretation. Historical science was enriched by the monographs of Associate Professor Stoiko Kolev ('The Struggle of the BCP for a Popular Front, 1935-1939', Sofia, 1959), Academician D.Koshev ('The International Significance of the September 1923 Uprising', Sofia, 1964), Associate Professor Ilcho Dimitrov ('Bourgeois Opposition in Bulgaria, 1939-1944', Sofia, 1969), Associate Professor Velichko Georgiev ('Bourgeois and Petty Bourgeois Parties in Bulgaria, 1934-1939', Sofia, 1971).

One of the most salient features of historical research at the University in the period 1959-1971 was the more confident embarkment by some of the university historians upon research into the development of the Bulgarian people under socialism. Some of the young historians at the University - Associate Professor Ilcho Dimitrov, Associate Professor Nikolai Genchev and others did a lot towards the elucidation of the complex process of political consolidation of the people's democratic govern-

ment in Bulgaria in the early years of the transition from capitalism to socialism. (Ilcho Dimitrov, 'Crucial Years', Sofia, 1969; Velichko Georgiev, 'The General Trade Union in Bulgaria, 1944–1947', Sofia, 1967).

The University lecturers on history of the BCP and history of the CPSU also made professional headway. During the same period monographs on the history of the BCP and of the youth revolutionary movement in Bulgaria were published by Associate Professor Asparuh Avramov ('Organizational Principles of the Formation of the BCP Left-Wing Socialists, in the Initial Period of Its Bolshevization, 1917–1923', Sofia, 1962), by Associate Professor Stoyan Petrov ('Strategy and Tactics of the BCP in the Struggle Against Monarcho-fascism', Sofia, 1969). Studies, articles and essays on the history of the BCP, of the workers', trade-union and peasant movement in Bulgaria were published by the candidates of historical sciences Georgi Naoumov and Pavlina Laskova²⁵.

In the early 1960s, the collective works 'Short History of Bulgaria' (1962) and a three-volume 'History of Bulgaria' (1961–1964) were published. The authors of 'Short History of Bulgaria' were historians from the University: Academician D. Kossev, Professor H. Hristov and Professor D. Angelov. Together with other historians from the University they were the authors of the three-volume 'History of Bulgaria'. The experience accumulated made it possible in the late 1960s and the early 1970s to commission the writing of a multi-volume 'History of Bulgaria' to the most prestigious historians from the University. Their experience in the interpretation of Bulgarian history from a Marxist-Leninist point of view allowed them to undertake the accomplishment of that exclusively complicated, difficult and responsible task²⁶.

In the early 1960, lecturers with academic rank at the Faculty of Law engaged in intensive research work. In 1962 they published a total of 21 studies and monographs as well as 43 articles, not counting the works submitted for publication by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. This considerable scientific output of a significant practical value dealt with topical problems of the theory and practice of law.

The reorganization of research conducted by the lecturers at the Faculty of Philology on the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory and methodology and the accelerated training of scholars during the transition from capitalism to socialism opened up real possibilities for the further advancement of scientific thinking in that faculty, too. Further studies were carried out in linguistics and the theory of literature. The publication of literary sources, monographs and studies continued. The major work 'Atlas of Bulgarian Dialects' was published in the 1960s and

among its authors were prominent scholars from the University. Considerable contributions were made by Academician V. Georgiev, Professor I. Douridanov and other experts from the University of Sofia in Indo-European, Slavic and Balkan linguistics²⁷.

The research work done by literary theorists was enormous. Professor Georgi Tsanev published his three-volume 'Pages from the History of Bulgarian Literature'. Two volumes were published in 1964 and 1967 of the four-volume 'History of Bulgarian Literature', a collective monograph by scholars from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia. This fundamental work follows the overall centuries-old development of Bulgarian literature from the time of Cyril and Methodius up to the present. A special literary and historical study came out in 1967 written by Professor Kouyu Kouev about Chernorizets Hrabur. In 1969 Professor Emil Georgiev published an extremely valuable monograph on Cyril and Methodius and presented in the completest form possible the truth about the creators of the Bulgarian and Slavic alphabet and especially the role of Bulgaria as the cradle of that alphabet. His study 'Literature of Exacerbated Struggles in Medieval Bulgaria' published in Sofia in 1966 was also of especially high scientific value. He shed light on a number of problems of the development of letters in the other Slav countries and their place within the respective literary process. The research conducted by Academician P. Dinekov on Bulgarian folklore and on the history of Old Bulgarian literature was of exclusive value. Academician P. Zarev published a comprehensive generalizing work, the voluminous 'Panorama of Bulgarian Literature'. He was also the author of 'National Psychology and Literature' (1970) and of 'Transformed Literature' (1971). Literary historians from the University had indubitable achievements in the comparative study of the mutual relations of Bulgarian literature with the other Slavic literatures and especially with Russian and Soviet literature.

Creative research work was carried out at the Faculty of Western Philology. A natural subjective prerequisite for the enrichment of the multifaceted scientific life at the Faculty was the enlargement of its scientific and teaching staff and the improvement of its scientific qualification. The number of candidates and doctors of science grew. The improvement of the Faculty structure and the introduction of new subjects was also instrumental in the manifestation of the scientific knowledge of the lecturers. The members of the department of French language and literature published studies on the history of French literature, on modern French or comparative studies of French and Bulgarian (Professor T. Tomov,

Professor Pavlina Pavlova, Professor B.Nikolov, Associate Professor N.Terzieva, Associate Professor Y.Simeonov and others)²⁸.

Particularly noteworthy was the research accomplished by the lecturers at the department of Italian language and literature. Along with the regular syllabus, they studied the influence exerted by the Italian poets and writers Dante, Boccaccio, Vico and Goldoni on the cultural life of Bulgarian society (Professor Ivan Petkanov, PhD, Professor T. Tomov). The studies on the work of Dante, G.Verga and G.Deledda go to the credit of Professor Ivan Petkanov, PhD, while those about Antonio Gramsci are due to the efforts of Senior Lecturer L.Topouzova. Italian linguistics was represented by the research of Professor Ivan Petkanov. It was devoted to the lexical interference of Italian with the Bulgarian and to the infiltration of Slav elements into the Romance languages and dialects²⁹.

The research and lecturing staff of the department of German language and literature also worked on some aspects of German prose and poetry, their penetration into Bulgarian and the depiction of the character of G.Dimitrov and the Reichstag Fire Trial in German literature. The lecturers of the department studied the genesis of the German language, contemporary German – morphology, syntax, word formation and the stylistic characteristics of some German writers. The comparative studies of German and Bulgarian are of interest. The scientific character of the department was determined by the publications of Professor S.Stoichev, Professor L.Ognyanov, PhD, Associate Professor B.Djonov, Associate Professor V.Nikolov, Associate Professor T.Sougareva, Associate Professor Z.Mechkova-Atanassova, Associate Professor P.Petkov, Chief Assistant Professor N.Dakova, Candidate of Philology, and others.

The scientific contribution of the lecturers from the department of English Language and Literature was to the credit of Associate Professor V.Filipov, Associate Professor V.Sharenkov, Associate Professor G.Pavlov, Associate Professor Pauline Pirinska, Senior Lecturer R.Roussev, Senior Lecturer L.Sarieva, lecturer B.Trenev, Senior Lecturer T.Kirov, Assistant Professor A.Shourbanov, Candidate of Philology, etc. who worked on problems of English and American literature. Associate Professor M.Rankova published a research work on the origin and development of the English language. Assistant Professor A.Danchev, Candidate of Philology, produced two works in the field of Old English. Problems of modern English were elucidated in the research works of Associate Professor Zh.Molhova (phraseology of English, peculiarities of substantivization in English, English-Bulgarian parallels

in syntax, etc.), of Associate Professor M. Rankova who made a comparative study of adverbials in Bulgarian and English. Associate Professor V. Sharenkov's work on some Bulgarian-English parallels in folklore was also highly interesting³⁰.

The scientific output of the lecturers on the staff of the department of classical languages was substantial. The problems of classical Greek literature, of classical Greek language and Greek epigraphy were studied by Professor A. Nichev, Professor G. Mihailov and others. Several studies of Greek-Bulgarian literary contacts, as well as of modern Greek were published by Professor A. Nichev. The problems related to the classical Roman literature were the focal point of the scientific works of Professor R. Gandeve. The scientific efforts of Professor K. Vladov were devoted to the structure of the Thracian language. Senior lecturer M. Portalski was the author of valuable publications on Cicero and Quintilian. Seneca's style was the subject of studies in publications by Assistant Professor A. Nikolova. The research carried out by Professor B. Gerov and devoted to the Romanization of the Balkan lands and Latin epigraphy has earned well deserved recognition in this country and abroad.

The greatest contribution to the development of mathematics at the University of Sofia, of its basic branches and sub-branches and sectors was made in the 1960s by the prestigious scientists at the Faculty of Mathematics including Academician Lyubomir Iliev, Professor Alipi Mateev, Professor Ivan Chobanov, Professor Blagovest Sendov, PhD, Professor B. Dolapchiev, Associate Professor A. Gyonov, Associate Professor G. Genchev, Associate Professor T. Argirova, Associate Professor B. Penkov, Associate Professor D. Dobrev, Associate Professor Doichin Doichinov, Associate Professor Nikola Martinov, Associate Professor Y. Douichev, Associate Professor K. Dochev, Associate Professor D. Skordov and others. In 1969, Academician Lyubomir Iliev was distinguished with the title of Dimitrov Prize Laureate for exceptionally great achievements in some fields of mathematics.

At the beginning of the 1970s, after the integration of the Faculty of Mathematics at the Sofia University and the Mathematics Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the establishment of the Unified Scientific Centre of Mathematics and Mechanics, the research done by the University mathematicians grew in scope. Significant achievements were registered in the theory and practice of mathematical modelling, in the theory of approximations, in the theory of probabilities and statistics, in the theory of optimization and the theory of programming. Biological phenomena and complicated demographic, economic and production processes were successfully subjected to mathematical modelling. Prog-

ramme systems were worked out in the field of operational research. Most of the pure research of high scientific value was introduced into practice and some teams of scientists and lecturers were awarded by the government and by the management of different departments and economic organizations³¹.

Better material, structural, organizational and cadre prerequisites were provided for the development of physics at the Sofia University in the 1960s. The range of scientific problems preoccupying most of the lecturers at the departments of radio physics and electronics, nuclear physics, semiconductors and astronomy was predetermined by the formation of the scientific interests of those lecturers during their specialization in the Soviet Union. However, the most important factor for the qualitatively new stage in the development of physics at the University, for the expansion of the research and production profiles and the identification of promising, strategic fields of scientific interest, was the policy of the BCP of establishing a national electronic industry. Due to the consistent implementation of that policy, the relative share of research in the main fields of modern physics increased at the Faculty and that coincided with the trends of development of physics in the world.

Very good results were achieved in the research carried out by the lecturers of the department of theoretical physics mainly in two fields: physics of high energies – elementary particles, and the theory of solids. Significant contributions were made in the field of quantum mechanics. Monographs were published in French. Most of the publications of members of the staff with academic rank appeared in prestigious scientific journals. A substantial success in nuclear physics was the correction of the concept of the so-called 'highest admissible dose' in the irradiation with ionizing rays. Moessbauer spectrometers were designed, and some of them handed to research institutes and industrial enterprises. A new method of Moessbauer spectroscopy was developed and applied in the elucidation of the processes of corrosion, surface diffusion phenomena, etc. This method was experimented and introduced in France, Sweden, the USSR and Japan, while physicists from the USA proposed an agreement on joint scientific projects.

Research in the department of radio physics and electronics extended to cover new areas. The creative quests of the staff of these departments were channelled towards the field of non-linear optics, lasers, vacuum technology, physics of the plasma and microwave radio physics. Experiments were conducted at the laboratory of quantum electronics and at the laboratory of plasma physics. The results of the

theoretical and experimental studies were used for the solution of practical problems.

A process of even further link-up of research at the Faculty of Chemistry with the development of some branches of the Bulgarian national heavy and light industry began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Faculty staff began to service to a high degree industrial production via the system of contracts signed with the research sector. In 1969, 74 scientific publications came out, some of them in foreign scientific journals, while 57 works were at the printers'. The analysis of the content of the research done by the staff of the Faculty of Chemistry shows that along with the theoretical contributions, some of the publications had direct and long-term significance for mining, metallurgy, petrochemistry, the pharmaceutical and dyes and paints industry. Especially valuable were the catalysts developed for the petrochemical processes and the results of the research into the composition of the products of the Bulgarian oil-bearing rose³².

Biology also made headway in the 1960s within the system of university learning. As a result of investigations of the flora, several plant species unknown to science and to the country were discovered. A multi-volume 'Flora of the People's Republic of Bulgaria' was published. A considerable number of new and useful wild growing plants were studied with a view to their industrial use. Works by Academician D.Yordanov, Professor Boris Kitanov, lecturers A.Yaneva and M.Simeonovski were published. The algae in the basins of some rivers and lakes were studied. Contributions were made to the development of paleobotany, to the study of the anatomy and physiology of plants³³.

The University zoologists continued to study Bulgaria's fauna. Valuable works were published on regional zoography of the different parts of the country. Studies began of the ecology of animals. Observations and investigations were made of the fauna of various groups of invertebrates, as a result of which new species for Bulgaria and for science were discovered. Contributions to zoology were made by Associate Professor T.Peshev, Professor G.Kozarev, Associate Professor D.Tashev, Associate Professor P.Mihailova, Chief Assistant Professor S.Gateva and others³⁴. The zoologists from the department of hydrology and ichthyology, headed by Associate Professor Angel Angelov made scientific contributions to the development of Bulgarian hydrobiology, fish-breeding and ichthyology.

Impressive and voluminous research work developed in the 1960s at the Faculty of Geology and Geography. When it became an indepen-

dent Faculty in 1963, University geology ceased being an auxiliary discipline and turned into a truly pure and applied science. The lecturers at the departments of geology of the Sofia University scored successes both in the theoretical elucidation of geological forms and structures and in the search for ore and mineral deposits in Bulgaria. Substantial raw materials resources were discovered and developed on the basis of geological surveys. Special stress should be laid on the elaboration of a new classification of minerals, based on the crystallo-chemical and geochemical principle. It is one of the most accurate in world science. Evidence of the achievements of the staff of the department of geology were the scientific works of the Geology Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences at home and abroad. The works on crystallography and mineralogy were translated into foreign languages and studied worldwide. Major contributions were made by Academician Ekim Bonchev, Corresponding Member Vassil Tsankov, Professor Tsonyo Dimitrov, Professor Georgi Atanassov, Professor Petko Mandev, Professor Maria Zhelyazkova, Professor Vassil Vergilov and others³⁵.

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International activities of the University. In the early 1960s the international activities of the University of Sofia were carried out under the conditions of political detente in the world and the further internationalization of the intellectual life of humanity. The positive global trend of cooperation between states in the tackling of a number of common problems of the formation of the intellectual potential of the individual nations became stronger. Cooperation expanded among the socialist countries especially within the frameworks of the CMEA, in the training of university graduates to meet the requirements of teaching and research. There appeared a growing need of exchanging scientific ideas and technologies and of scientific methods of student training, above all at the most prestigious universities within the socialist community.

The increased number of international scientific events in which the Sofia University participated during the period under review was also explained by the policy of the BCP and the government of Bulgaria towards an expansion of scientific and cultural contacts with all countries. The higher scientific qualifications of the lecturers at the Sofia University and their command of foreign languages, the allocation of greater funds by the state for travel abroad for scientific purposes, for

post-graduate studies and specializations, the signing of cooperation agreements between the Sofia University and other prestigious universities were all favourable prerequisites for the lasting presence of Bulgarian science in the scientific life of the world.

The appearance of some of the most prominent lecturers of the Sofia University abroad took several forms which have developed into traditions. One form was the sending of these scholars to the universities of Moscow, Leningrad, Berlin, Leipzig, Prague, Budapest, Belgrade, Rome, Paris, London and elsewhere where they gave lectures. The Bulgarian university science was represented on its true merit at foreign universities by Academician V. Georgiev, Professor I. Douridanov, Professor A. Kozhouharov, Corresponding Member Gencho Piriyov, Professor Angel Angelov, Professor Bistra Tsvetkova, PhD, Associate Professor Velizar Velkov, Associate Professor E. Mihailova, to mention but a few. In the early 1960s, the teaching activities of Associate Professor Georgi Mihailov and Associate Professor Stefan Stanchev at foreign universities were very highly assessed³⁶. Through these courses of lectures the summit achievement of Bulgarian science reached specialists in other countries in the various fields of scientific knowledge, and through them to the scientific and cultural communities in the individual countries. A lecture course in Bulgarian studies has become functioning since the late 1970s in the USA, where Professor Andrei Pantev, PhD, has established fine traditions.

Another form of familiarizing the University lecturers with the progressive trends in the scientific development of the past and present civilization of the European and other peoples are the scientific trips abroad. The longer stays of Sofia University scholars in other countries enables them to acquire extensive bibliographical information in their fields of research, to seek out original documentary and other sources, to study scientific literature in depth and to get a clear idea of the state of world science in their special fields of interest. All this enables the Bulgarian scholars sent abroad to apply comparative analysis as a method of their research. The specializations of scientists and lecturers from the Sofia University at higher educational establishments in the humanities abroad contribute to the improvement of their scientific qualifications, language knowledge, methodology and general culture. In the early 1960s and during the 1970s, a greater number of Sofia University scholars went on longer or shorter specializations abroad. These were scholars from the Law Faculty, the Faculty of Philosophy

and History, the Faculty of Western Philology, and the Faculty of Slavic Philology. Staff members of academic rank from the above faculties visited the best known universities in the USSR, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, Britain, Italy, France, the FRG, the USA and other countries³⁷.

Another positive trend was evinced in the efforts of the university authorities to expand international scientific cooperation in the late 1960s and the 1970s. It conformed to Bulgaria's policy of boosting the development of the special sciences (mathematics, chemistry, biology, geology, geography) and of enhancing their role in the intensification of the national economy on the basis of the revolution in science and technology. The need was well comprehended of sending lecturers of academic rank from the faculties of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geology and Geography to specialize in scientifically more advanced countries³⁸.

A useful form of intercourse of Sofia University scholars with the world scientific community are the international scientific congresses, conferences, symposia and seminars.

The university lecturers are among the most active participants in the international congresses, conferences and symposia, Professor G.Piryov, Professor N.Chakurov, Professor G.Hroussanov, Associate Professor E.Petrova and Associate Professor B.Ivanov read papers at the 1969 international congresses of education in Warsaw. Papers were presented by Professor Z.Atanassov and Professor Chakurov to the international conference in tribute to Jan Amos Komensky in Czechoslovakia, Associate Professor D.Donev read papers at the international congresses of defectology in Moscow, Berlin, Warsaw and Paris. University research younger lecturers, too: Associate Professor S.Chernev, Marin Andreev, Candidate of Science, and Lyudmil Stanoev, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences³⁹.

The University historians are very actively involved in international scientific life. They have established fruitful scientific cooperation with their colleagues from the Soviet Union and with prominent historians from other countries. History lecturers from the Sofia University presented papers at the international congresses on history, on Slavic studies, on Balkan studies and at a great number of international scientific sessions, conferences, symposia and colloquia, held in the 1960s and 1970s. Taking part in these international scientific events were Academician Dimiter Kossev, Academician Hristo Hristov, Academician Nikolai Todorov, Professor H.Danov, Professor Hris-

to Gandev, Professor Bistra Tsvetkova, Professor N. Genchev, Professor A. Pantev and others.

The national scientific sessions organized by the Sofia University and by other scientific institutions with the participation of world-famous scholars on the occasion of jubilee anniversaries of great historic events or outstanding personalities also opened up opportunities for scientific cooperation at institutional level and for personal contacts. The scientific session devoted to the 1050th anniversary of the death of Kliment of Ohrid was held in December 6 and 7, 1966 in Sofia. It was attended by prominent Slavic scholars from many countries. The session was opened by Academician P. Dinekov, Academician I. Snegorov, Corresponding Member H. Hristov, Corresponding Member E. Georgiev, Corresponding Member K. Mirchev, Professor D. Angelov, Professor I. Douichev, Senior Research Associate B. Angelov. Foreign scholars also took part in the session: Professor S. Bernstein (USSR), Professor E. Kiparski (Finland), Professor D. Bogdanov (Romania), Professor I. Kurtz and Professor K. Horalek (Czechoslovakia), Professor A. Tahiaos (Greece), Professor K. Penushljiski (Yugoslavia), Professor F. Slawinski (Poland)⁴⁰.

Lecturers from the Sofia University present papers and take part in international scientific seminars. The international summer seminar in Bulgarian language and literature, held every year in Bulgaria enjoys great popularity among Bulgarian and Slavic scholars from other countries. It is attended by more than 100 professors, associate professors and young lecturers from almost all European countries. Guests of the Sofia University have been the eminent scholars Vivian Pinto, PhD, lecturer at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the London University, Genady Tsihun from the USSR, Otto Haas from Austria and others. The best known Bulgarian literary theorists, linguists and historians read lectures at the seminar. The foreign guests polish up their knowledge of the Bulgarian language, receive information about the latest achievements of Bulgarian linguists and historians and establish and maintain scientific contacts with Bulgarian university lecturers.

The visits of foreign government delegations to the Sofia University enhance its prestige. Dr Ahmed Sukarno, President of the Republic of Indonesia, V. V. Ghiri, President of the Republic of India and other heads of state have been made with due ceremony honorary doctors of the University. As former rector of several universities in his country the President of India did a lot towards the expansion of scientific and cultural cooperation between Bulgaria and India. That is why he

well deserved the highest academic degree conferred by the Sofia University⁴¹.

A turnabout took place in the international activities of the Sofia University, when they were placed on the legal basis of bilateral cooperation agreements signed with other universities. In March of 1960, a cooperation agreement was signed by the authorities of the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia and the Karl Marx University of Leipzig. It provided for the return visits of lecturers to present courses of lectures, of groups of students for practical training, and of scientific information, scientific literature and university newspapers. Agreements on scientific cooperation have also been concluded with the Moscow State University, with the V.I.Lenin State University in Minsk, with other Soviet universities and a number of universities in other countries⁴². On the basis of these agreements the scientific contacts of the Sofia University with foreign universities have developed traditional and new forms in a number of fields.

* * *

The Party conception for the improvement of the system of university education in the contemporary conditions. The advancement of the educational system and of higher education in particular is an integral part of the overall upsurge and refinement of the socialist society. In this sense, the structure of the university is not and cannot possibly be something static. The system of higher university education endorsed in the 1960s played out its role. Notwithstanding its improvement in the 1970s, it gradually tended to become obsolete. The system reflected the specific features of a definite stage in the development of the socialist society in Bulgaria, when the new social relations and socialism as a social system had triumphed, but society did not yet have at its disposal that requisite material, technical and intellectual base which could most effectively resolve the tasks facing the country. The tendency of extensive growth then predominant in the development of the state economy tended to direct higher education to the attainment of certain quantity indicators.

In the 1970s and especially after the Eleventh Congress of the BCP in 1976 and the National Party Conference on Quality in 1978, when the intensive factors of growth came to the fore in the Party approaches to the development of the social and economic spheres, a new strategy was launched in the educational system. In the early years of the decade, an important step was taken along this line by the integration of

the Sofia University with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Its aim was to focus, on the one hand, the scientific potential for tackling the problems of the scientific and technical revolution, and on the other, to train a new type of specialists matching the requirements of modern economy and of the highly developed cultural sphere of the socialist society by their knowledge and skills.

Guidelines for the solution of the problems of higher education at the current stage were provided at the July 1979 Plenum of the CC of the BCP. In his introductory speech to the plenum, T. Zhivkov pointed out that 'the measures in the sphere of education are an integral part of the efforts that the Central Committee has in recent years been making to resolve the strategic problems related to the accelerated material and cultural development of Bulgarian society'⁴³.

The assessment of the 1969 reform along with the positive characteristics related to the improvement of the organization and guidance of the process of instruction and the diversification of the study material, also outlined a number of unresolved problems or problems that had emerged parallel to its introduction like, for instance, the reduction of the volume of important fundamental disciplines or the time for practical training. It was found that the participation of sectoral ministries and other departments and organizations in the guidance and management of education was inefficient, even though they were the main employers of higher education graduates. The importance of the economic approach in the management of the educational system was played down and neither the establishments of higher learning nor the economic organizations bore any economic responsibility for the qualifications of the specialist trained. At the same time, the great number of subjects studied at some higher educational establishments complicated the self-realization of their graduates⁴⁴.

The 'Theses of the Development of Education in the People's Republic of Bulgaria' adopted by the July 1979 Plenum outlined the goals that higher education should strive to accomplish in the training of students as highly qualified full-fledged specialists in their particular spheres: solid grounding in the basic sciences shaping the fundamental training of specialists in the respective professions, extensive professional training in a certain sphere of science and practice; high standards of language training, free command of Russian and the use of at least one Western language; willingness and skill to acquire or evolve new knowledge and to be abreast of contemporary science, technology and practice; thorough political grounding, knowledge of the econo-

mic, organizational and social mechanisms in the respective specific sphere, improvement of the post-graduate qualifications⁴⁵.

The major problem inherited from the education reform introduced in the '60s was the insufficient unity within the overall system – from primary to higher education. In this connection, stress is now laid in this country on the necessary changes of the structure. A further elaboration of the idea of T. Zhivkov, put forward in his letter to the CC of the Dimitrov Young Communist League of July 18, 1978, the Theses pointed out that the establishment of a three-level structure of education was expedient. The first level should provide fundamental general theoretical grounding in a specific professional field. On its completion, an evaluation should be made of the results and inclinations shown and depending on it the university students should pass on to the next level or drop out and be redirected to other educational establishments. The second level should give the specialist his bearings and his training for a profession of a broad profile. It is the purpose of this stage of education to cultivate special theoretical, technological, economic and managerial and administrative knowledge and practical skills which would ensure the trainee's creative self-realization in a broad professional sphere. The third level should ensure specialization in production itself, or in scientific research⁴⁶.

The implementation of the idea of a three-level structure made new demands on the defining of the professional fields, too, and hence on the updating of the list of subjects in which higher education was needed. The working out of the new qualifications characteristics began in conformity with the new list.

The central task, however, was the achieving of a new quality and actual effectiveness of the content and methods of training in research and in practice. Its accomplishment called for the continuation and further development in depth of the closest tie-up between the process of instruction and research work that had started in the '70s. The refinement of the integration links between the higher educational establishments and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was considered the shortcut to the transformation of the establishments of higher learning into complex centres of research and training, capable of resolving the complicated tasks of scientific and technical progress. The Theses substantiated the need for an economic approach to the planning and organization of research and development work. This policy is being implemented by way of the opening, with contributions from the employers of cadres and users of research elaborations in the national

economy, of problem-oriented and sectoral laboratories, centres and other units within the system of higher education⁴⁷.

Special role has been assigned to the Sofia University in the process of the overall reorganization of higher education in the 1980s. Pointing out that without the active assistance of the entire scientific sphere rendered to the strengthening of the key units of research and training, the reorganization cannot take place, the Central Committee of the BCP gave a high assessment in the Theses of the role of the University of Sofia in the development of the theory and practice of education in Bulgaria, noting the traditions of the oldest establishment of higher learning in the training of teachers and lecturers for the various fields of scientific knowledge⁴⁸.

The ideas regarding the objectives of the reform in the system of higher education elaborated by the July 1979 Plenum of the CC of the BCP were specified and enriched in the course of their implementation in recent years. Instrumental in this sphere were also the decisions of the First Congress of Bulgarian Education (1980), the decision of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP of May 17, 1985 on the celebration of the centenary of the Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia, the February 1985, January and July 1987 plenums of the CC of the BCP.

Referring to the Theses as 'a science-based programme and solid foundation for the rapid adaptation of the Bulgarian educational system to the trends of the new stage in the revolution in science and technology', the February 1985 Plenum of the CC of the BCP noted in its decisions the emergence of a number of new factors demanding their correction and enrichment in a number of spheres. The need for new approaches to the material and technical base of science and education and the organization of their guidance and management was called forth by the level attained in electronics. The new organization of research work should be based on plans and programmes most closely complying with the needs of the country's development. The planned organization of research work based on economic principles and levers was outlined as the main task. T. Zhivkov's report to the plenum pointed out the fact that in view of the new situation, the system of education had to ensure the training of a new type of specialists for the entire economic sphere, specialists of new quality⁵⁰. Research in the higher educational establishments had to even more closely combine its tasks related to the development of scientific and technical progress with those of the training of cadres with the highest specialization.

The decision of Politburo of the CC of the BCP about the celebration of the centenary of the Sofia University occupies a special place in the evolution of the Party conception about higher education and the place of the Sofia University in it. Appreciating its leading place in the intellectual life of socialist Bulgaria, this document also stresses that this is the only centre for the training of specialists in almost all fundamental and a number of applied sciences. Hence the need within the reform of education now underway that university education be resolutely improved, that the existing setbacks in cadre training be overcome, that scientific research be more closely linked to the needs of the country⁵¹.

It is pointed out in the decision in connection with the jubilee anniversary of the Sofia University that the fine university traditions and the all-round support of the state will further strengthen it as a leading training, scientific and ideological centre within the system of higher education.

The specific tasks set in the Politburo decision provided a fresh impetus to the work on improving the structure and content of training and research at the University, intensively pursued also since the endorsement in 1979 of the Theses on Education.

The January 1986 and the July 1987 plenums of the CC of the BCP added new details to the guidelines for the development of higher education, especially as regards the role it plays in the securing of the scientific and technical back-up of the national economy and the promotion of the independence and self-government of the University. In implementation of the Party conception about the development of higher education in the conditions of the sweeping scientific and technical revolution, in the 1980s the University staff has resolved three main groups of problems: 1. New content has been invested in the syllabuses and new quality lent to the content of the disciplines taught; 2. Training on three levels has been introduced; 3. New structural units have taken shape in compliance with the requirements of student training and research in conformity with scientific and technical progress.

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Милчо Лалков, Трендафил Митев

**100 ГОДИНИ СОФИЙСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ —
ИСТОРИЯ И СЪВРЕМИЕ**

Българска

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Коректор Таня Шумарова

Изд. индекс 223

Код 36/9531422231/0603-123-88

Дадена за набор август 1988 г.

Подписана за печат септември 1988 г.

Излязла от печат септември 1988 г.

Формат 600х840/16 Тираж 1500+110 ЛГ 2—6

Печ. коли 8,50 Изд. коли 7,91

Университетско издателство "Климент Охридски"

Набор — Агенция "София прес"

Печат — ДП "Балкан"

